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STRICTURES,

ON THOSE PASSAGES IN THE SECOND AND THIRD VOLUMES OF

COL. NAPIER'S HISTORY

OF

THE PENINSULAR WAR,

WHICH RELATE TO

THE MILITARY OPINIONS AND CONDUCT

OF

GENERAL LORD VISCOUNT BERESFORD,

G.C.B., &c. &c. &c.

10319

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

M.-GEN. SIR B. D'URBAN'S REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS

IN

THE ALEMTEJO AND SPANISH ESTREMADURA,

DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1811

Second Edition.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

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1835

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STRICTURES

ON PARTS OF

COL. NAPIER'S SECOND VOLUME.

It is now rather more than three months ago, that my attention was directed to the peculiar bearing of some passages in the second volume of Lieutenant-Colonel Napier's History of the Peninsular War, and I confess that my surprise was equal to my regret, on remarking the very unfavourable and unjust impressions which they were calculated to produce, with regard to the conduct and abilities of the distinguished officer to whom the command of the Portuguese army was entrusted. I cannot help imagining that the author must, on this occasion, have written under the influence of those strong party feelings which so often, perhaps unconsciously to himself, appear to lend their colour to the facts and characters that pass under his review, and to render void those various qualifications for an historian, which every impartial man must acknowledge Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to possess. Had the

statements to which I refer proceeded from a person of less honourable name, or appeared in a work of less just pretensions to consideration than the History of the Peninsular War, they would have remained unnoticed by any observations of mine I should have left the errors of any inferior author to the detection of time, and felt satisfied that the many and important services of Marhal Beresford would, in the judgment of posterity, be sufficient to vindicate his reputation. But the present case is not of a kind to be thus easily disposed of; it is not one of ordinary occurrence. The representations contained in the History of the Peninsular War, are not representations to be despised. They may, if unrefuted, have the effect of biassing the sentence of that posterity, by which the aggrieved party might, under other circumstances, be willing to abide: and it is demanded by common prudence, as well as common justice, that a public contradiction of them should be placed upon record. Influenced by these impressions, I determined to enter into a minute examination of those passages in Lieutenant-Colonel Napier's work, which appear to me to bear unfairly on the professional character of Lord Beresford, and to meet them with a plain, clear, and unornamented counter-statement of facts. In resolving upon this measure, I felt convinced that, though political prejudices might involuntarily have misled its author into a false appreciation of Lord Beresford's views and conduct as a General, nothing more would be required to produce a candid avowal of error and the erasement of the objectionable passages from his History, than a satisfactory exposure of the

fallacies into which he has been incautiously betrayed.

I am aware that this remonstrance does not appear so early as might have been desired; but it was not till the latter part of last September that I became acquainted with Lieutenant-Colonel Napier's statements, and only in the course of the last month that I could obtain the documents which were requisite to secure accuracy to myself, in discussing matters that took place somewhat more than twenty years ago. I was anxious that nothing should be published, in my reply to the mistakes of the historian, which could be justly cited as a mistake of my own. In endeavouring to render the following statement thus correct, it was necessary to consult several contemporary memoranda, and to submit my notes to the inspection of officers, who were on the spot at the time, and perfectly acquainted with the local and military circumstances in question. Some delay has thus been unavoidably incurred; but it shall no longer be protracted; and I will therefore proceed, at once, to the consideration of such passages in the History of the Peninsular War, as regard the conduct of Lord Beresford.

It is not possible to believe that Lieutenant-Colonel Napier, in writing of that distinguished officer, was influenced by personal motives: I utterly disclaim such a base and illiberal supposition. How, indeed, could he be so?—he is, I understand, wholly unacquainted with my Lord Beresford:—and yet, the very first passage of his history, in which the name of that commander is introduced, plainly intimates the author's unfavourable disposition towards him,

and insidiously inclines the reader to a prejudiced and unfavourable view of his operations. "The Portuguese government," says Colonel Napier,* "whether spontaneously, or brought thereto by previous negotiation, had offered the command of all the native troops to an English General, with power to alter and amend the military discipline, to appoint British officers to the command of the regiments, and to act without control, in any measure he should judge fitting to ameliorate the condition of the Portuguese army."—"The Portuguese government wished Sir Arthur Wellesley should be their General; and the English cabinet offered the situation to him, but he refused it; and, it is said, that Sir John Doyle, Sir John Murray, General Beresford, and even the Marquis of Hastings, then Earl of Moira, sought for the appointment. The last was, undoubtedly, a man well fitted, by his courtly manners, his high rank, and his real talents, both in the cabinet and in the field, for such an office; but *powerful parliamentary interest prevailing, Major-General Beresford was appointed, to the great discontent of many officers of superior rank, who were displeased that a man, without any visible claim to superiority, should be placed over their heads.*" This brief extract contains, I verily believe, as many fallacies as lines. It would be difficult, perhaps, to find in the work of any other historian, a passage equally short and equally abounding in mis-statement and mistakes. These errors may not, indeed, of themselves be of very material consequence to the public; but they are of great importance as they regard Lieutenant-Colonel

* Vol. ii., pp. 149, 150.

Napier's authority as an historian; and they evince the easy credulity with which he receives and adopts any information that has a certain political bias. I shall eventually consider the whole passage in detail, and endeavour to conduct the reader out of the labyrinth of error, in which the gallant author has so ingeniously involved him; but I must first turn to the principal subject of my present observations;—the ungenerous and injurious manner in which Lord Beresford is here spoken of at the very outset. This officer was, we are told, appointed to his command, because "powerful parliamentary interest prevailed," "to the great discontent of many officers of superior rank," and "without any visible claim to superiority,"—that is, according to the insinuation of Colonel Napier, Lord Beresford owed his command to no known merits of his own, but to a corrupt system of favouritism. I shall not, on the present occasion, waste my time in eulogizing the merits of Marshal Beresford; for he is a tried man, and his public actions have rendered the praise of any private individual, like myself, superfluous. But I will proceed to shew that he was not so entirely destitute of all "visible claim to superiority" as the gallant Colonel has assumed. I will simply state the reasons, which may have induced the King's Ministers of the day to make choice of that officer for the command; and those reasons will, I think, be considered by every impartial and sound-judging person, as amply sufficient, to justify their nomination, and to annihilate the suspicion of parliamentary influence. What the rival claims might have been, of the "many discontented officers of superior rank," whom

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier speaks of as "displeased" with the appointment, it is impossible to tell, for he has not condescended to name them. He has withheld the information which might enable us to enter into a comparative estimate of their services and abilities; but the "claims" of General Beresford are "visible" to any one whose intellectual eye is not blinded by prejudice, or who will take the trouble of inquiring of that officer's previous services and the qualifications which he possessed for that particular command.

There were *three* circumstances, which took place within the space of about fifteen months immediately preceding General Beresford's appointment to the command of the Portuguese army; and which may very reasonably be regarded as the causes that directed the attention of his Majesty's Government towards him. These honourable circumstances Lieut.-Col. Napier ought to have recollected. The *first* was his having conducted the expedition against Madeira, which was captured in the last month of 1807, and of which, under very peculiar circumstances, General Beresford remained governor for eight months, and which he left at his own earnest solicitation, to join the troops then hovering about the coast of Spain and Portugal. The *second* was his nomination, after the treaty of Cintra, to act as commissioner for the full and just execution of that treaty. To this important trust General Beresford was called by Sir Hugh Dalrymple, to whom he was a perfect stranger, and at a moment, when he was separated from the column commanded by Sir Hugh, and acting with that on the left, under the orders of Sir

Arthur Wellesley. In both the above situations, General Beresford was *brought much in contact with the Portuguese, and became intimately acquainted with Portuguese affairs. He was also somewhat conversant with the language of the people.* As, on both those occasions, his conduct was fully known; is it not most probable that General Beresford was selected by his Majesty's Ministers on account of the zeal, temper, and discretion which he then exhibited, and that he was not indebted for his appointment to those unworthy influences to which Lieut.-Col. Napier has ascribed it? The *third* circumstance, to which I have alluded, as making part of the "visible claims" of General Beresford, and conducing to point him out as the officer most fit for the high situation in which he was placed, was his having been selected by an authority, which is greatly respected by the author of the History of the Peninsular War, the lamented Sir John Moore, to cover the retreat of the army at Corunna; an appointment which was afterwards confirmed by his successor in the command.—It is very painful to be thus compelled to vindicate the well-earned "claims" of an officer, who, from the very days of his boyhood, has been actively employed in the service of his country; who, till the conclusion of the Peninsular war, had never more (including the period of his regimental service, which was not a very short one) than three months' leave of absence from military duty at a time, and that not above twice or thrice; who has always followed the fortunes of his regiment, and served with it in all parts of the world where British troops have been en-

gaged; whose zeal and intelligence have constantly pointed him out to his superiors, both at home and abroad, to be employed as a general officer, or in the most prominent situations; and whose exertions have been uniformly followed by success; —it is, I repeat, very painful, that one should be obliged to vindicate the appointment of such an officer to a high and important post—which his services recommended him to, and his qualifications eminently fitted him for,—against the charge of favouritism and parliamentary influence. It would be very painful, whatever might be the circumstances, and whoever might be the organ of the detraction; but it is more particularly distressing, when the ungenerous and depreciating insinuation is discovered in the pages of a grave history, and a man like Lieutenant-Colonel Napier is its author: but the truth is, that that gentleman knows nothing of Lord Beresford whatever; that he has given himself no trouble to inquire into his military services or his personal character; that he did not know, when he began to write of him, when, or where, or how that distinguished officer had been employed; and that,—with a common and most senseless prejudice, which is so often found in connexion with a certain class of political opinions, —he took it for granted that, because Lord Beresford was highly allied, he must necessarily be deficient in professional skill; and because he possessed that family patronage, which might bring his merits into notice, it must follow, as an inevitable consequence, that he could not be in possession of the merits that might deserve it.

But, having relieved my mind upon this my principal subject of interest, I return to the consideration of the other errors contained in the passage of Lieut. Col. Napier's History, given in the preceding pages. "The Portuguese Government," he tells us, "whether spontaneously or brought thereto by previous negotiation, had offered the command of the national troops to an English General, with power to alter and amend the military discipline, to appoint British officers to the command of the regiments, and to act, without control, in any manner he should judge fitting to ameliorate the condition of the Portuguese army;"* and here, on the very threshhold of the subject, the author exhibits his want of accurate information. He describes the local government of Portugal as immeasurably more liberal than it had ever entered into its imagination to be. What is thus stated as having been "a spontaneous offer, or brought about by previous negotiation," had, at the time spoken of by Lieut. Col. Napier, never entered into the contemplations of the Regency, and was most assuredly very foreign from their wishes. The proposal sent to England, and which Mr. Villiers, the British Minister, procured with difficulty, was the simple request that an English Lieut. General should be sent to Lisbon, to hold there the rank of Marshal, and take the command of the Portuguese forces: but the Portuguese Government, in adopting this measure, had no intention, as the gallant historian seems to suppose, of surrendering up that control which they exercised over the army and its chiefs, and which they had

* Vol. ii, p. 149.

made so miserable an use of. It was after Lord Beresford's arrival there, that he had to contend for the powers enumerated above. Indeed, on accepting the appointment, the only conditions which he made with the Government at home were, that he should be allowed to relinquish his command and return to England, unless the Portuguese Regency would consent to the partial employment of British officers, and would place in his hands the entire control of the army, with the consequent regulation of all rewards and punishments. The negotiation for obtaining these powers took place after Lord Beresford reached Lisbon. The Regency at first positively refused to grant them; and they were at length, after a world of difficulties, most reluctantly conceded to the determined, though conciliatory, representations of the British Minister, and on his Lordship's positive refusal to assume the command upon any other terms than those which he had originally stipulated. It was in consequence of the obstacles that occurred in bringing this matter to a satisfactory conclusion, that Lord Beresford remained, at a time so critical, nearly a fortnight at Lisbon before he assumed the command of the Portuguese army. He arrived there on the 2nd of March, 1809, and his notification to the army as its Commander, is dated the 15th of the same month. All this is, perhaps, of very little moment in itself: but it is certainly of consequence in one point of view; it shews that Lieut.-Col. Napier is not always possessed of the most satisfactory information on the real state of those very matters of fact, which he does not hesitate to promulgate with the most admirable intrepidity of assertion.

But to proceed to the next paragraph: "the Portuguese Government wished," the History of the Peninsular War informs us, "that Sir Arthur Wellesley should be their Commander: and the English Government offered the situation to him, but he refused it; and, *it is said*, that Sir John Doyle, Sir John Murray, General Beresford, and even the Marquis of Hastings, then Earl of Moira, sought for the appointment." Whether any of these gallant and meritorious officers did or did not seek for the command, I will not take upon myself to decide. The first time I ever heard of their applications was in the History of the Peninsular War. But I have very strong suspicions that no such solicitations were ever urged. I do not percieve what opportunity was afforded for those several officers to advance their claims. I do not believe that any military man in London had a notion that such an appointment was in contemplation, till he heard that it had already been disposed of. With regard to one of the officers (Sir John Murray) whom Col. Napier names as having been a candidate for the situation, I am almost certain that he was absent on foreign service at the time; and, consequently, incapable of taking those steps to secure the command in Portugal which the Historian has ascribed to him;—and with regard to another, (General Beresford), I have the most positive assurance and the most entire conviction, that no such application ever was, or could have been made. Lieut.-Col. Napier is personally unacquainted with Lord Beresford; and it is not, therefore, a matter of surprise that he should know so very little of his general character, and have formed so false an

estimate of the high and honourable feelings by which that Nobleman has been actuated through life. I can inform him, that my Lord Beresford did *not* ask for his employment;—I can further assure him, that, in the whole course of his long and laborious career of service, he never did ask for any thing of the kind; and, in the present instance, I can add, that the first time he heard of his Majesty's Ministers having this foreign command at their disposal, was at the moment of his being desired to undertake it. Lord Beresford returned with the army from Corunna, towards the end of January, 1809. He had not been long in Town, when the command of the Forces in Jamaica was offered to him. This proposal he declined; because, as there was no chance of war in that quarter, it would place him out of the way of all active service; and, under such circumstances, he was not sorry to secure an opportunity of spending some time with his family, of whom he had seen little since the year 1793. About a week after, his Lordship received a note from the present Marquis of Londonderry, then Under Secretary of State to Lord Castlereagh, expressing a desire to see him that evening. Lord Beresford called at the time appointed, supposing that he was to receive some further communication on the subject of Jamaica; but was informed, that a proposal of moment was to be made to him, and one which he could not decline; that Lord Castlereagh had received the King's orders to desire him to proceed to Portugal, there to receive from the Regency the command of the Portuguese army, with the rank of Marshal. Lord Beresford asked if

any option was left him, and, on being answered that there was none whatever, but that he had received his Majesty's commands; he simply replied that, such being the case, it was his duty to obey, and that he was thus saved a great deal of troublesome consideration on the subject. This was all that Lord Beresford knew about the appointment which he is represented as having solicited, and obtained, after much rivalry and competition, by the means of parliamentary influence. He then, I know, believed,—and it is not likely that Col. Napier's statement should have effected any change in his impressions,—that the proposal from the Portuguese Government had very recently arrived; so recently, as to have rendered it impossible for those General Officers, who are described as having made it the subject of their applications, to have ever heard of its having been received. So much for Lieut-Col. Napier's assertion, that Lord Beresford and others had sought for this appointment. It is true the assertion is qualified. The author's expression is, "*It is said;*" and had he limited himself to the propagation of such a trumpery report, I should have left him in the full possession of all the benefit of his easy credulity. But he proceeds himself to deal with the report, not as an "*on dit*," but as a fact. He argues upon that which he states as a rumour, as if it were a certainty; and concludes, "but powerful parliamentary interest prevailing, Major-General Beresford was appointed." Upon an uncertain fact, our author grounds a positive assertion. The premiss is an "*on dit;*" the conclusion is, that Lord Beresford was preferred by favouritism and corruption. This is a

very curious mode of arguing; and it proves Lieut.-Col. Napier to be excessively deficient in qualifications most essential to the task he has taken upon himself, I mean those of a close reasoner and a sound logician.

The author of the History of the Peninsular War has stated that "the appointment of Lord Beresford was the occasion of great discontent among many officers of superior rank, who were displeased that a man of no visible claim to superiority should be placed over their heads." Lieut.-Col. Napier has here fallen into a strange confusion; he speaks of a discontent, which certainly did, in some degree, exist, but he is incorrect both with respect to the time and the cause of that discontent. There was no one, at the moment referred to by the author, in the least dissatisfied at Lord Beresford's being named to the command of the Portuguese army. No one envied him. His post was by no means at first considered as an advantageous position. There was no other officer of his rank, at least I never heard of one, who, at that time, either desired or would have accepted it. I maintain, that there was no dissatisfaction either expressed or felt on account of the appointment itself; though, in one solitary instance, in that of Lord Beresford's personal friend the late Sir John Murray, very strong objections were made to the *rank* by which it was accompanied. As a field-marshal, Lord Beresford necessarily acquired precedency and command over his senior officers in the British army. He was also given the local rank of an English Lieut.-General, because the Portuguese Regency had especially desired an officer of that

military grade. Lord Beresford was not less alive than others to the unpleasantness of this arrangement. He was most anxious—he attempted by all means in his power—to obviate it; and proposed to the Regency, that he should undertake the command of their army with the rank of Portuguese Lieut.-General. This proposition was rejected by them as impracticable, because a number of very old Portuguese Lieut.-Generals were already employed, who could not be commanded by an officer of junior rank in their service. At the precedency over older British officers, which was forced upon Lord Beresford by these arrangements, the late Sir John Murray most certainly expressed himself dissatisfied; but I am not aware that any fixed objection, even on this account, was advanced by any other officer. The more general dissatisfaction, to which Lieut.-Col. Napier alludes, occurred at a subsequent period; when, under the wise and wholesome, the firm and conciliatory direction of Marshal Beresford, the Portuguese army had acquired consistency and character; when the fashion of fancying that our footing in the Peninsula was unsound and precarious, had given place to more sanguine expectations; when it became a popular opinion that the Allied army, under the command of its great chief, would be able to maintain its position; and that its operations would be of permanent duration: then, I grant, there were many started up, who were anxious to occupy the ground which Marshal Beresford had cleared, to reap the harvest which he had sown, to calculate upon the casualties and advantages of the position he occupied, and pretty loudly to express

that discontent, which Lieut.-Col. Napier has stated fairly enough, but which he has not attributed to the proper portion of his history. Much correspondence upon the subject took place at the time, in which, of course, Lord Beresford bore his part; but this is a subject on which it is unnecessary to enter, and, perhaps, the point has already been sufficiently discussed.

I proceed to observe on another passage of the History of the Peninsular War. It is stated,* that "Marshal Beresford arrived at Lisbon the beginning of March (2nd), and having received the confirmation of his powers from the Regency, fixed his head-quarters at Thomar, collected the Portuguese troops in masses, and proceeded to recast their system on the model of the British army; commencing, with stern but wholesome rigour, a reform that, in process of time, raised out of chaos an obedient, well-disciplined, and gallant army, worthy of a high place among the best in Europe; for the Portuguese people, though easily misled and excited to wrath, are of a docile and orderly disposition, and very sensible of a just and honourable conduct in their officers." So far the author has related in this paragraph a simple tale. He has adhered to the real fact, and has shewn himself not unacquainted with the general outline of affairs, and the character of the Portuguese people. His praise also of the state of discipline which their army eventually exhibited, is appropriate and just. But still, the victim of political prejudice as he is, he cannot bring himself to give their zealous and intelligent commander the

* Vol. ii., p. 151.

credit, which that commander's zeal and intelligence had deserved; and without having it in his power to bring forward a shadow of proof in support of his assertion, he continues, "But this reform was not effected at once, nor without many crosses and difficulties, which General Beresford would never have overcome, if he had not been directed, sustained, and shielded by the master spirit under whom he was destined to work." The former part of this passage, which alludes to the crosses and difficulties that Lord Beresford had to encounter, is perfectly correct. It confirms what has already been stated with regard to the disposition of the Regency, on investing him with the command of their army. But, I think, every reader will coincide with me, in condemning the literary integrity, and protesting against the unfairness, of an historian who, without any authority, or any pretence of authority, can volunteer an assertion so derogatory to the fame of a great and distinguished commander, as that which is conveyed in the final period of the paragraph above quoted. The author has discovered a very easy and commodious way of damning the reputation and depreciating the conduct of any officer, to whom his prejudices may happen to attach themselves. He may enjoy the satisfaction of having endeavoured to diminish the well and hard earned fame of Marshal Beresford, that he may add another inch to the gigantic renown of the Duke of Wellington; but I can inform Lieut.-Col. Napier, that he knows very little of that "master spirit" of whom he speaks, if he imagines that he could have endured any one, in Lord Beresford's arduous and important

position, who required to be "directed, sustained, and shielded." The Duke of Wellington would not have gone on with such a person six months: it was his system, always to have effective officers in places of important trust, and never to interfere with those officers in the dispatch of what was entrusted to them, as long as he saw that their duties were well and effectively discharged.. Taking the expressions in the sense which every reader will, I think, receive them in, I have no hesitation in affirming, that Lieut.-Col. Napier has no grounds whatever for the statement which he has made on this subject: and, without any further comment or discussion, I take upon myself to appeal from the authority of Lieut.-Col. Napier, to the authority of the Duke of Wellington himself, in giving it the most unequivocal and the fullest contradiction. I most positively declare, that the whole merit of the formation and the discipline of the Portuguese army is the undoubted property of Marshal Beresford, and that the Duke of Wellington had no concern whatever with that army, except in its after employment in the field.

The History continues to say: "The plan of giving to English officers the command of the Portuguese troops, was, at first, proceeded on with caution; but, after a time, the ground being supposed safe, it was gradually enlarged, until almost all the military situations of emolument and importance were held by Englishmen." I quote this passage merely for the purpose of setting the author historically right. The above paragraph is quite incorrect, both in point of fact, and in the meaning which it is calculated to convey. The permission to intro-

duce English officers into the Portuguese army was, as I have already stated, one of the conditions on which Lord Beresford accepted the command. It cannot be necessary to enumerate the various reasons which rendered such a measure most desirable. Many will suggest themselves immediately to the mind of every military reader: but the commander of the Portuguese army never, for a moment, meditated so extensive an introduction of British officers, as the above quotation appears to intimate. Indeed, Lord Beresford was unable to obtain as many as he required. It was not every individual who offered himself, whose services were accepted; and the historian of the War in the Peninsula will, perhaps, be surprised to learn, that the English officers in the Portuguese service, if at all, never much exceeded 200. Now, there were twenty-four regiments of the line, of ten companies each, and 1400 rank and file; there were twelve regiments of cavalry of 600 each; and there were twelve battalions of caçadores of 600 each, and four regiments of artillery of 1000 men each—making, altogether, fifty-two regiments of the line. Some of the British officers were, as the author observes, on the staff as general officers, and in other inferior employments; and it consequently follows, that there were not, on an average, nearly *four* British officers to a corps—that is, they did not constitute *one tenth* of the officers employed. This, surely, is not such a proportion as the expressions of Lieut.-Col. Napier would lead one to suppose. But he informs us, that "all the military situations of *emolument and importance* were held by Englishmen." I scarcely know what he means by

situations of emolument; they are things in which the Portuguese service by no means abounds. If the author alludes to the commands of brigades and divisions, he would be in great error as to the relative number of the two nations employed. If he alludes to the government of provinces, there never were more than *two* British officers invested with such a command—Colonel Trant at Oporto, and, at an after period, Lieut.-Col. Austen in the Algarves; but I have cause to know, that neither of these gentlemen considered his situation as valuable, in a pecuniary point of view; and, certainly, with Colonel Trant, the contrary was the case. In truth, with three exceptions, the governments of the Castle of Belem, of the Castle at the mouth of Setuval Harbour, and of the Castle of Oporto, (the governors of which receive some trifling contributions from vessels entering their ports), there is no such thing as a "situation of emolument" in the whole Portuguese service in Portugal; and Lieut.-Col. Napier will, perhaps, be surprised and gratified, on hearing that these three solitary "*situations of emolument,*" so far from being held by Englishmen, were uniformly conferred on veteran Portuguese officers. In no single instance was a British officer of that service ever appointed to a situation of pecuniary responsibility, or in which money would have to pass through his hands. To enable them to do good service, it was Lord Beresford's constant care to place them beyond the reach of suspicion, and prevent the possibility of their incurring any of those accusations which originate in invidious feelings.

Lieut.-Col. Napier concludes the paragraph, the

commencement of which we have just remarked upon, by saying—"And this, combined with other causes, gave rise to numerous intrigues, not entirely confined to the natives, and, as we shall find, in after times seriously threatening the power of the Marshal, the existence of British influence, and the success of the war." Something of this kind certainly existed; but, as certainly, not to the extent described. Lord Beresford, at the time, knew not much of these intrigues, and is still very little acquainted with them. They never gave him any uneasiness, nor distracted his attention from the main object of his exertions to the consideration of such secondary matters. They were, perhaps, more serious than he apprehended; and the author may have good reasons and authority for what he has advanced. He intimates, that we are to hear something more upon this head: and I do not doubt but Lord Beresford will find interest and entertainment in his forthcoming disclosures.

I need not make any observations on pages 152, 153. They contain a mere recapitulation of the state and position of the several corps previously treated of. I shall only remark, that on these occasions, dates are very much wanted, and that they ought to be given in the margin.

I proceed, therefore, to page 154, at which the author enters upon a discussion of the different opinions entertained by Lord Beresford and Sir John Cradock, who was then in command of the British troops in Portugal, on the subject of a military movement recommended by the former officer.

It is difficult to understand why the consideration of this difference of opinion between two general officers, from which Lieut.-Col. Napier intimates, though I think erroneously, that no results ensued,* should occupy so large a space in his history. Lord Beresford and Sir John Cradock must, I conceive, be equally surprised at finding a matter of private conference thus brought before the public. But, however, the author has thought fit to discuss the opinions on a given military point between those two officers, and, though he has sought for and procured all the arguments on one side, and never taken the trouble to inquire for any on the other, it must be owned that the subject is in itself a fair theme of historical discussion, and affords a ground, on which I am not at all afraid of entering the lists, as the advocate of Lord Beresford's opinions, in opposition to Lieut.-Col. Napier, who has on this occasion descended from the seat of calm and impartial judgment, which the historian ought to occupy, that he may exercise his power of special pleading in favour of the views of one of the parties.

The passage of the author's history, in which this subject is discussed, is not a short one; but it is necessary to extract it at length, that the reader may be enabled to understand the point at issue.† "Sir John Cradock keeping the British concentrated at Lumiar and Saccarem, waited for the enemy to develope his plans, and, in the mean time, endeavoured to procure the necessary equip-

* "This reasoning, so evidently unsound, *did not weigh with Sir John Cradock*, who resolved to preserve his central position." Vol. ii., p. 155.

† Vol. ii., p. 153, *et seq.*

ments for an active campaign. He directed magazines to be formed at Coimbra and Abrantes; urged the Regency to exertion; took measures to raise money, and despatched officers to Barbary to procure mules. But while thus engaged, intelligence arrived that Victor had suddenly forced the passage of the Tagus at Almaraz, and was in pursuit of Cuesta, on the road to Merida; that Soult having crossed the Minho, and defeated Romana and Silveira, was within a few leagues of Oporto; and that Lapisse had made a demonstration of assaulting Ciudad Rodrigo.

"The junta of Oporto now vehemently demanded aid from the Regency, and the latter, although not much inclined to the Bishop's party, proposed that Sir John Cradock should unite a part of the British forces to the Portuguese troops under Marshal Beresford, and march to the succour of Oporto. Beresford was averse to trust the Portuguese under his command, among the mutinous multitude in that city; but he thought the whole of the British army should move in a body to Leiria, and from thence, either push on to Oporto, or return, according to the events that might occur in the latter town; and he endeavoured to persuade Cradock to follow this plan.

"It was doubtful, he said, if Victor and Soult intended to co-operate in a single plan; but, on the supposition that it was so, he considered it essential to drive back or to overcome one, before the other could come to his assistance. Victor was then in pursuit of Cuesta; if he continued that pursuit, it must be to enter Seville, or to cripple his opponent previous to the invasion of Portugal; in either case,

he would be in the Sierra Morena before he could hear of the march from Leiria; and as Cradock had daily intelligence of Victor's movements, there would be full time to relieve Oporto and to return again to the defence of Lisbon. If, however, Soult depended on the co-operation of Victor, he would probably remain on the right of the Douro until the other was on the Tagus, and Lapisse also would be contented for the present with capturing Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida.

"This reasoning, so evidently unsound, did not weigh with Sir John Cradock, who resolved to preserve his central position, covering the capital at such a distance as to preclude the danger of being cut off from it by one army while he was engaged with another. 'Lisbon and Oporto,' he observed, 'were the enemy's objects; the former was of incomparably greater importance than the latter. Portugal was in a state of anarchy equally incompatible with firm resistance and rapid movements. The peasantry were tumultuous and formidable to every body but the enemy; and Beresford himself acknowledged, that the regular forces were mutinous, disregarding their officers, choosing when and where to rest; when to fight, and when to remain in quarters; and altogether unfit to be trusted within the circle of the Oporto mischief. The British troops, therefore, were the only solid resource; but they were too few to divide, and must act in a body, or not at all.'

"Was it most desirable to protect Lisbon or Oporto? The first was near, the second two hundred miles off; and although the utmost exertions

had been made, the army was not yet equipped for an active campaign. The troops were ill clothed, and wanted shoes; the artillery was unhorsed; the commissariat possessed only a fourth part of the transport necessary for the conveyance of provisions and ammunition, and no activity could immediately supply these deficiencies, inasmuch as some of the articles required were not to be had in the country, and, to obtain others, the interference of the Regency was necessary, but hitherto all applications to that quarter had been without any effect. Was it wise to commence offensive operations in the North?—Soult and Lapisse together were estimated at 30,000 men, of which above 5000 were cavalry, and he himself could only bring fifteen guns and 12,000 men, of all arms, into the field; yet if the British army marched with the avowed intention of relieving Oporto, it must accomplish it or be dishonoured!

"Was it consistent with reason to march 200 miles in searchof a combat, which the very state of Oporto would render it almost impossible to gain, and for an object perhaps already lost? Suspicion was alive all over the country: if Oporto was already taken, the army must come back; that would be a signal for fresh tumults—for renewed cries that the country was to be abandoned—Lisbon would instantly be in a state of insurrection, and would be even more formidable to the British than the enemy; besides, it was impossible to reckon upon Cuesta's aid in keeping Victor employed. He was personally inimical to the English, and his principal object was to gain time for the increase and discipline of his own force.

"Victor was, apparently, pursuing Cuesta, but his parties had always appeared in the neighbourhood of Badajos, and there was nothing but a weak Portuguese garrison in Elvas to impede his march through the Alemtejo. To cover Lisbon and the Tagus was the wisest plan: fixed in some favourable position, at a prudent distance from that capital, he could wait for the reinforcements *he expected* from England. He invited the Portuguese troops to unite with him: a short time would suffice to establish subordination, and then the certainty that the capital could not be approached, except in the face of a really formidable army, would not only keep the enemy in check, but, by obliging him to collect in greater numbers for the attempt, would operate as a diversion in favour of Spain. The general soundness of this reasoning is apparent, and it must not be objected to Sir John Cradock, that he disregarded the value of a central position, which might enable him to be beforehand with the enemy in covering Lisbon, if the latter should march on his flank. The difficulty of obtaining true intelligence from the natives, and his own want of cavalry, rendered it utterly unsafe for him to divide his army, or to trust it any distance from the capital.

"Marshal Beresford's plan, founded on the supposition that Cradock could engage Soult at Oporto, and yet quit him, and return at his pleasure to Lisbon, if Victor advanced, was certainly fallacious; the advantages rested on conjectural, the disadvantages on positive data: it was conjectural that they could relieve Oporto; it was positive that they would endanger Lisbon; the proposition was, however, not made upon partial views."

Such is Lieut.-Col. Napier's statement of the advice afforded by Lord Beresford; and such are the arguments on which he has concluded, that the advice was fallacious. In the Appendix to this pamphlet, I have reprinted some documents which the historian has himself published in the Appendix to his own volume. I have given Marshal Beresford's letter of 29th of March, 1809, in which his plan was suggested to Sir John Cradock: I have added Sir John Cradock's answer; and, as I shall have occasion to refer to the two letters of the Duke of Wellington of the 23rd of April, 1809, and the extract from his Grace's letter to Lord Castlereagh of the 24th of April, those papers will also be found at the end of this publication, as printed in Lieut-Col. Napier's work. With the aid of these four documents, I shall, I think, be enabled to set aside the arguments of the historian, and consequently overthrow the conclusion which he has founded upon them.

Nothing can be more foreign from my thoughts than any wish to treat the opinions of Sir John Cradock with disrespect. It appears from the account furnished by the foregoing extract, that he had many reasons for rejecting the proposition of advancing towards Oporto, which could not have been known to Marshal Beresford at the moment of his suggesting such a measure. He was, it seems, deficient in the necessary equipments for his troops, in beasts of burthen for his artillery, and in transport for the general purposes of the army. The want, also, of magazines of provisions and forage must have been to him of primary importance in coming

to a decision on the movement which had been proposed to him. Taking the state of the British army to have been as the historian has represented it, Sir John Cradock appears not only to have been unwilling to advance, but may be said to have been actually incapable of advancing, from his position. Besides, he seems to have considered himself bound to abide by the determination which he had previously expressed to his Majesty's Ministers. But if the reasons for pushing the British army forward to Leiria were so "evidently unsound," and so "fallacious" as the historian has alleged, how happened it that, without any material change in the state of things from the time of receiving Marshal Beresford's recommendation, Sir John Cradock actually did advance the British army to that town, exactly as Marshal Beresford had recommended? I do not, be it remembered, wish to impugn the talents, or animadvert upon the conduct of Sir John Cradock; I am anxious, as far as it is compatible with the vindication of the opinions of the distinguished officer whom Lieut.-Col. Napier had so injuriously treated, to avoid all critique on the conduct and opinions of others;--but the same military movement, under the same circumstances, cannot be both right and wrong, politic and impolitic, correct and erroneous. If the proposal of advancing the army to Leiria "was evidently unsound" when suggested by Marshal Beresford, the movement itself ought, in impartial justice, to have been condemned by the historian, as at least, equally unsound, when put in execution by Sir John Cradock.

Lieut.-Col. Napier has completely misunderstood

the nature of Marshal Beresford's views and intentions; and on this misapprehension,—assisted by his total ignorance of the topography of the country, more particularly as regards the Tagus and the positions in the neighbourhood of Lisbon,—his opinions and conclusions are grounded. He states that "Marshal Beresford was averse to trust the Portuguese under his immediate command among the mutinous multitude in the city; but he thought the whole of the British army should move in a body to Leiria, and thence either push on to Oporto, or return, according to the events that might occur."* The author then conceives Marshal Beresford to have proposed, that the British forces *alone* should proceed against Oporto. This was entirely contrary to the fact. He has probably been led into this error by a passage of the Marshal's letter of the 29th of March, 1809,† which says, "upon the subject of marching a British force to Oporto, under the actual circumstances and under the consideration of the various points from which the enemy at present threaten us, we had yesterday a full discussion, and which renders it unnecessay for me now to recapitulate the several reasons which induced me to submit to your Excellency's consideration the propriety of advancing the British forces to Leiria, to be then pushed on to Oporto, or otherwise, as the information from different parts may render expedient." It is, I conclude, the above passage which has led the author of the History of the Peninsular War to state that Marshal Beresford wished the British force alone to proceed to Oporto. There is no other part

* Vol. ii., p. 154. † Appendix. No. I.

of his letter which could warrant such an inference. Indeed, the whole of the remainder is contradictory of such an opinion. The Marshal's proposal was, that the British troops should in the first instance, move to Leiria. Now, the author has correctly stated that the Portuguese forces were collected at, and in the vicinity of Thomar. Has it escaped the observation of Lieut.-Col. Napier that this town is in a parallel line with Leiria, either as to the base or final possible object of the proposed movement? The two places are equidistant from Lisbon and from Oporto; and, in proposing that Sir John Cradock should advance his army to Leiria, Lord Beresford's object was, that the British should be brought into a parallel line with the Portuguese. The author will find also, that in speaking of a further movement being made upon Oporto, the Marshal always adopts the plural form of expression; as, for instance, "supposing on *our* arrival at Leiria, Oporto offered a prospect of holding out till *we* could reach it;" or again, "Victor, by the time he could hear of *our* movement, would be in the Sierra Morena." But the last paragraph but one of the Marshal's letter, is quite decisive as to his views upon this subject, while it also evinces his deference to the opinion of Sir John Cradock. "It is for your Excellency to judge, under the actual circumstances, of the propriety of this movement towards Oporto, *not only for the British troops but also for those of the Allies*, as by my instructions, I must consider you as commanding the Allied armies; *and the time is now certainly arrived for what efforts they can make being combined. Undoubtedly their being employed in seperate projects, will cause each*

falling separately, and without advantage to the common cause." It must be remembered, as the letter states, that Marshal Beresford had, on the very day preceding, most amply and personally discussed the subject in agitation; that he was not anxious to restate his views upon it; and that, writing with the consciousness of their being known and understood by Sir John Cradock, he did not feel it requisite to enter into a more minute and detailed explanation of them: but how the author could possibly overlook those passages in Marshal Beresford's letter, which intimate that, in his ultimate designs with regard to Oporto, he contemplated the advance of the *whole* Allied army, Portuguese as well as British, is a mystery which I confess myself unable to fathom.

But, having corrected one misapprehension of Lieut.-Col. Napier's, I must proceed to observe, that he has strangely perverted Lord Beresford's meaning in another part of the Extract from his History, now under consideration. In summing up that Commander's arguments for the advanced movement, he makes him say, that "it was *doubtful* whether Victor or Soult intended to co-operate in a single plan." But what says the written document from which this representation of his views is made? It gives, as his principal reason for recommending the advanced movement, "*that there appeared an intention of such co-operation.*" Of course, the Marshal speaks of the existence of such an intention as a matter of uncertainty; for what but the most infatuated presumption would venture authoritatively to pronounce on the measures which the commanders of an opposing army might, or might not, have in contemplation? Be-

sides, Lord Beresford, in corresponding with Sir John Cradock, would naturally intimate his sentiments upon such a subject, without attempting to dogmatise, by too positive an assertion of them. But it does appear to me, that Lieut.-Col. Napier might most clearly have seen, from the terms of the Marshal's letter, that he was as certain as the nature of the case would allow him to be, that such a junction of the French forces, under Victor and Soult, was really meditated at the moment. The Marshal was right; and he ought, in common justice, to have received from the author of the History of the Peninsular War, the same credit for his military sagacity, which in some subsequent pages we find so lavishly bestowed on Buonaparte for foreseeing the Duke of Wellington's movement by the valley of the Tagus, towards Madrid: than which, by the bye, there is no other possible route from Portugal. It appears, from the evidence afforded by Lieut.-Col. Napier himself,* that Lord Beresford had exactly divined the intention of the enemy; nay, that he had anticipated the very orders of Buonaparte, in which the three corps of Soult, Victor, and Lapisse, are directed to co-operate: —and yet his "reasoning," the wisdom of which is proved by facts, and by the documents recorded in the author's own volume, is condemned as "evidently unsound." Marshal Beresford, looking at the theatre of war, and the condition of the opposing armies, takes the same view of the whole as Buonaparte himself took; and Lieut.-Col. Napier, forsooth,—with a very superficial knowledge of the circumstances of the time, and scarcely any of the localities,—sits

* Vol. ii., pp. 163, 164. Instructions to the Duke of Dalmatia.

calmly down by his fireside, with his pen in his hand, and has the presumption to record that those views are "evidently unsound."

Now, I must confess, that, looking back upon Marshal Beresford's reasoning on this point, and considering it under all the weight of the historian's censure, I cannot perceive the unsoundness of it. Napoleon had given orders, that the three corps should co-operate; because, I conclude, he thought such a measure necessary for the capture of Lisbon, and the expulsion of the English from Portugal. Admitting the full force of his great authority, it would be imagined, that the object of his enemy would be to anticipate and counteract his plans; to prevent the union of his forces, and to defeat one corps before the others could be brought up to accomplish so dangerous a combination. I cannot perceive what other course an English General could prudently have adopted, who entertained any intention of retaining his position in the country. Does Lieut.-Col. Napier really think that it would have been wiser to have waited for the completion of Buonaparte's instructions; to have remained inactive till the junction of these three corps, amounting, he informs us, to 60,000 men, was effected; and then, with our redoubtable army of 14,000 British, and the Portuguese army (which the author says would not have withstood 10,000 French), to have rested upon our arms, in expectation of the approach of the enemy? The circumstances turned out pretty nearly as Lord Beresford's letter had predicted. Marshal Soult did remain on the right of the Douro, waiting for, at least, the co-operation of Lapisse. This was perfectly

known to the Marshal Beresford, by the means of intercepted letters, and also from the urgency and anxiety which the Lieut.-Gen. Loison exhibited, when he came upon the Douro, at Pezo de Regoa and at Villa Real, to gain intelligence respecting the position of Lapisse. Could Soult have procured the co-operation of the latter, he would necessarily have come into direct communication with Marshal Victor : and it was clear he was waiting for that co-operation which he had a right to expect; because he knew that instructions to effect it had been given by Napoleon. Lord Beresford's opinion, with regard to Marshal Victor, was equally realised. He never turned his face towards Portugal. It is true, that some of his parties had appeared at Merida, but this fact ought never to have weighed in the consideration of his final object; for there are innumerable reasons, which no military reader can require to have detailed, which would lead a General to fling out flanking corps to as great a distance as circumstances would with impunity admit. General Lapisse, it is true, did not remain on the Portuguese frontier, nor attempt Ciudad Rodrigo, or Almeida; but the instructions of Napoleon, sufficiently justify Marshal Beresford's view of the line which that General was likely to adopt: and it is now clear that any other view would have been "unsound."

I fully concur in the account which the author has given of the anarchy that prevailed in Portugal, and of the insubordinate and mutinous state of the army at this period. Had he, however, inquired how it happened that this confused and wretched state of things was changed, at once, into a state of order and

discipline, he would have discovered that this incalculable good was effected by the conduct, energy, and decision of that very Lord Beresford, whose talents and services he exhibits so strong a predisposition to undervalue. Indeed, notwithstanding all the prejudices by which he is influenced, the author does in one place admit that such was the fact.

Passing on, however, to the subject in immediate discussion, it is demanded, and with great apparent emphasis, by Lieut.-Col. Napier, "Was it most desirable to protect Lisbon or Oporto?" Now, this, except in one point of view, that of securing a retreat, was not the question to be considered at that moment. The real question to be then considered, was,—"Whether we did or did not propose to hold Portugal, and finally to assist and co-operate with the Spaniards?" If we did not, can Lieut.-Col. Napier inform us for what reasonable object a British officer was appointed to take the command of the Portuguese army? But if we did propose to hold Portugal, and finally to assist the Spaniards,—which was the principle that Lord Beresford argued upon,—then the nature of the inquiry becomes changed; and we should ask, "What was the best mode of obtaining and keeping possession of Portugal, always taking care of Lisbon as the base of our operations, and as the means of securing a retreat in case of reverse?" In proposing his question, whether it was most desirable to protect Lisbon or Oporto, the author says, "the first was near, and the second 200 miles off." Most assuredly the first was near; very near, indeed; we were in it. But I cannot think, that Oporto's being 200 miles off, ought fairly to be considered as

any objection to Lord Beresford's proposition; for, had his opinion been acted upon, the points of departure would have been Leiria and Thomar; and from these places it was, that the prudence and advantage of marching towards Oporto was to be determined. In the above positions, the Allied forces would have been 80 miles from Lisbon, and 120 from Oporto; and, as I shall shortly shew they could not have been turned by Marshal Victor, they would, therefore, by taking those posts, have covered Lisbon as effectually as if they had been stationed at Lumiar and Saccavem.

Considering the Allied army as stationed at Leiria and Thomar, with a view to the defence of the Tagus, its left division would appear to be thrown forward; since Leiria, though at an equal distance from Lisbon with Thomar, is farther from any other part of the Tagus above Santarem. But that could be of little moment under the existing circumstances; and the right division might be said to be actually on the Tagus, at Abrantes and Punhete, where there were Portuguese troops in connexion with Thomar. I have said that Lieut.-Col. Napier has scarcely any local knowledge of the country, and to this extraordinary ignorance, his apprehension of the army's advancing to any distance from Lisbon, his dread of the operations of Victor, and his alarm for the safety of the capital, are all to be ascribed. He conceives that Marshal Victor could pass the Tagus at any point from its source to its mouth, which he might choose to fix upon. Indeed, he appears to assert this as a fact: "Soult alone, then," he says, "was no longer formidable to the capital; but that which weakened

him, increased the offensive power of Victor, who was now at the head of 30,000 men, and might march straight upon Lisbon, and through an open country, the only barrier being the Tagus, *a river fordable in almost all seasons.*"* It exhibits a very culpable disregard of accuracy and precision in any military man to speak thus generally of a river of such extent as the Tagus; and, strictly speaking, according to the letter of the text, I am led to suppose that Lieut.-Col. Napier considers the Tagus as a river that may be forded every where, and at almost every season. This being quite an error, all the arguments founded upon it must necessarily be erroneous. I will give a brief description of the river, and I will be a little more precise in my account, than the author has condescended to be. The Tagus, from the bar or embouchure to Lisbon, may be considered as an arm of the sea, and is at all times navigable for the largest vessels of war. Its narrowest point opposite to Lisbon, is one mile and a quarter in breadth. From this place it opens above Lisbon into a vast lake, about three leagues wide, which reaches to Salvaterra on one side, and Villa Franca on the other. For the first twenty miles above Lisbon, to Villa Nova, it is still navigable for brigs. Above Villa Nova, to Vallada, which is thirty-six miles from Lisbon, the tide flows, and the river is not fordable at any season of the year. From Vallada to Santarem, a distance of twelve miles, the river is generally full and rapid; and, though in this part, during a very short time in the summer months, fords may be met with, they are extremely bad and very little used.

* Page 266.

From Santarem to Abrantes is a distance of thirty-two miles; and between those towns, during a few of the summer months, the Tagus may be forded almost at any spot. But the author errs most widely, in supposing that the river has any ford, *in any place*, except during the very height of summer. From the time of the first rains, which fall towards the latter end of September, to the month of June, it would be a very rare occurrence to find a ford below Abrantes, or, indeed, within the frontiers of Portugal. An officer, with twenty years' experience of the country, assures me that he never heard of such a thing. The French army, under the command of Massena, in 1810, arrived on the Tagus on the 6th or 7th of October, and remained on it till the beginning of March ;* they held, at first, the whole tract of country on the right bank of the Tagus, from Villa Franca to Punhete, at the mouth of Zezere; and, for the whole time, they had occupation of the space of Santarem to the Zezere, and, indeed almost to Abrantes. Now, during that period, neither they nor the Allied army (which was posted on the opposite bank of the Tagus during the latter part of the time) ever discovered or heard of such a thing as a ford. For a considerable time the French had possession of the right bank, without any troops to oppose them on the left; and yet, as care had been taken to remove all the boats, they never found it possible to send a detachment to the left bank or into the Alemtejo side. I am not aware that more than one such detachment was ever known to pass, and that came over in a boat from Santarem, and

* The 5th, I think.

returned the same night. The Tagus, then, it is manifest, could not have been forded by Victor at the time in question, at any point between Lisbon and Punhete; now here the Zezere falls into it, at right angles from the north, and, being also unfordable at that season, forms another barrier to Thomar and Leiria, should the enemy have passed the Tagus to the eastward. It is then manifest, that (after leaving the proper garrisons in such places to the rear as might appear necessary) the real central position for an army, having to defend Lisbon against a combined attack from different quarters, would be the position recommended by Lord Beresford. With the English and Portuguese armies thus advantageously posted, could General Lapisse have marched to Abrantes? Did not our taking up that position effectually separate Soult from Victor? The latter was in possession of no means of crossing the Tagus; he had with him neither pontoon nor bridge equipage of any kind; and the river, from the frontiers of Portugal, was rolling down, as is always the case at this season of the year, a rapid, heavy, mighty, unfordable mass of water. Supposing Marshal Victor had, as Lieut.-Col. Napier points out, marched to Almada, what result would have ensued?—Many of the good ladies of Lisbon would, I dare say, have suffered considerable alarm; but, with a British Admiral in the harbour, armed with all the resources of his own fleet, and supported by the marine and arsenal of Lisbon, what could Marshal Victor have effected? Lieut.-Col. Napier does not appear to be at all aware of the danger of such a situation. But, setting that consideration aside, what injury could

he have done with his field pieces? He must very soon have discovered the error of his movement; and, after his march from Aldea Gallega to Almada, convinced of the disadvantages and perils of the position in which he had placed himself, would lose very little time in commencing his retreat. But, be that as it may, I have shewn, satisfactorily I trust, that, at the season of these transactions, the Tagus was nowhere fordable; that Marshal Victor could not have passed it so as to place himself in the rear of the Allied forces at Leiria and Thomar; that, occupying those positions, we prevented Soult and Victor from attempting a junction without the danger of being separately attacked; while, by the same movement, Lapisse was incapacitated from carrying his orders into execution, and placed beyond the reach of Victor's assistance, even had he been on the opposite bank of the Tagus. The historian recommends Saccavem and Lumiar as advantageous and proper posts for the defence of Lisbon. On this point I differ with him entirely, and conceive that his opinion must originate in ignorance of the country. I have no hesitation in asserting that, under the circumstances in which he places the British troops, no prudent General would venture to risk an action in that position. Lieut.-Col. Napier's approbation of this position seems grounded on the notion of its affording great facility for retreating to the ships in case of defeat; but would it not be a most injudicious measure to give battle on a field so near the place of embarkation? If the army were defeated, would not the enemy be intermingled with them, pell-mell, upon the shore, and most effectually preclude the

remnant of the troops from taking refuge in the vessels? Would not this be more especially the case where there was so great a superiority of cavalry?

But waiving the above objection, the position so highly approved by the author, would have been faulty in every respect. Place the British army at Saccavem and Lumiar; and how is all the ground, of some miles in extent, from its left to the Tagus at Belem, to be defended? The enemy could without difficulty turn it by Luz and Benefica, and would meet no obstacle in placing themselves in the rear of our position. They would be nearer the place of embarkation than ourselves; and, being in our rear, might occupy Belem before us. It must be remembered, that there was not, at this time, any preparations whatever made, either by works thrown up on favourable points, or by secondary positions near Lisbon, to cover a retreat, or retard a pursuit; though, in truth, these could not have been of any material advantage, where the field of battle was so near the point of embarkation. Besides, as I have said, the enemy, by turning the left of our position, round Lumiar, would be nearer Belem than the British. The position of Saccavem and Lumiar might, perhaps, have been a very good post for the English army, if we could have secured all the advantages, and prevented our enemy from discovering the advantages of the situation. But does Lieut.-Col. Napier forget, that the opposing army was commanded by Marshal Soult, a general not subject to overlook any weakness in his adversary's position? Does he forget that the French were most fully acquainted with the ground, from having been in possession of it so short a time

before? Thus I have shewn, and, I trust, to the satisfaction of the reader, that the position so much commended in the History of the Peninsular War, was improper in every point of view: that, looking to the position of the enemy's corps, neither Lisbon nor its environs could be considered as affording a central, but, on the contrary, a very retired position; and that by advancing the troops to the spot recommended by Marshal Beresford, they were placed in a situation which really was a central position; and where, under all the circumstances, their retreat, if found necessary, could have been as safely effected, as if they had been stationed in the more immediate neighbourhood of Lisbon.

The author, in aid of his opinion on this point, maintains that the course dictated by prudence was to wait quietly near Lisbon the approach of the united enemy, in order that time might be afforded Marshal Beresford for putting the Portuguese troops into a state of discipline, and not to risk what he calls positive danger from the army of Victor. Surely this is very contradictory. If we could not depend upon a few days to execute the proposed march from Leiria to Oporto—or say from Lisbon, if you will—what time could the Marshal depend upon for the stupendous work allotted him by Lieut.-Col. Napier? That author has himself described the condition of the Portuguese army, and has truly observed that the whole of it would not, at that moment, have resisted 10,000 French. What time then must it have required to make it equivalent to the 30,000 troops which Marshal Victor and General Lapisse could have added to the corps of Marshal Soult?

The author has not weighed well these matters. As to the argument, that a retrograde movement of the British army would be the signal for a general defection of the Portuguese nation and troops, Lord Beresford did not, at the time, agree in such a belief; nor has he, I suspect, ever discovered any reason since for changing his opinion: and as to the principle, that if the British army marched with the declared intention (which by the bye, was never proposed by the Marshal) of relieving Oporto, they would be dishonoured if they did not succeed; it is such an extraordinary notion for any military man to entertain, and so contrary to the sentiments by which all Generals are influenced, and on which all armies are conducted, that I shall not attempt to enter upon the discussion of it. The author in his text has enumerated very carefully, not only the primary, but the secondary reasons for not advancing the Allied army, which, from the misapprehension I have already pointed out, he speaks of as the British army; but he has either not remarked, or has omitted to mention, the secondary reasons that could be urged for the advance. It will be recollected, that Marshal Beresford only proposed, in the first instance, that the Allied forces should be placed at Thomar and Leiria, and that, after our arrival there, the positions of the enemy's several corps should be considered, and the subsequent operations of the English and Portuguese determined upon. That his opinion was rejected is very true; but that it made its impression, and was not upon more mature reflection considered "as evidently unsound," are facts established by the advance of the British troops to the very point he

had recommended, within a fortnight after the advice had been received. Matters of fact are, on all occasions, very stubborn things to deal with; but the British army being once posted at Leiria, Lieut.-Col. Napier suddenly changes his sentiments. It is no longer Lord Beresford's recommendation that is to be condemned; but Sir John Cradock's movement that is to be defended; and the partial advocate begins to cast about him for another set of arguments, by which his own previous reasonings may be outweighed. He would tell us that circumstances were altered, and that the plan suggested by Lord Beresford, ought to be viewed in a very different light from that in which it had been regarded about a week before: and why? because General Hill had arrived with 5000 troops and 300 artillery horses! This reinforcement was indisputably an advantage; but not so great as to account for the sudden revulsion in the author's sentiments. But has he forgotten the circumstances by which that advantage was more than counterbalanced?—Has he forgotten the entire defeat and great slaughter of Cuesta's army at Medillim, on the 28th March; the occupation of Oporto by Soult, and his being allowed, from encountering no opposition, to occupy the Minho, with all the Partido d'Oporto, even to the south of the Douro as far as the Vouga; to seize the fortress of Valença; to open his communication with Tuy; to reinforce his army with the garrison and the recovered sick, which he had left in that town; and to bring up his whole park of artillery?—These are immense advantages. But Lieut.-Col. Napier has not once referred to them. When Lord Beresford's proposal was made, Oporto

was unsubdued; the numbers to protect it were great; and, with the assistance of the works which had been thrown up, were fully equal to the task. It is true they were, as described in Lord Beresford's letter, turbulent and insubordinate; and I agree with the author that, according to ordinary calculation, little was to be expected from their efforts; but still there was the chance that, as the enemy approached, they might submit and be more amenable to control; and they were, at all events animated by the strongest feeling of enthusiasm against their assailants. We had seen what this feeling had effected in other parts of the Peninsula, contrary to all expectation and belief; and were we to put out of sight the very recent conduct of the peasantry at Caminho, who had attacked and defeated the French upon their landing, and had foiled Marshal Soult in his attempt to pass the Minho?—But, admitting that the prospect of resistance at Oporto was as bad as the author considered it, yet why should the British army, by remaining as far as possible from the scene of action, be rendered incapable of taking advantage of any favourable event which might occur?—I need not inform Lieut.-Col. Napier, that casualties often happen in war, which in the hands of a skilful commander may decide the fate of a campaign: why should the Allied army be placed in a position where such lucky chances could by no possibility be turned to good account? Who, at the present moment, would venture to determine what effect the advance of the British army might have had on the tumultuous and multitudinous assemblage of defenders of Oporto? But, I think it very easy to shew, that the

advance of the 12,000 British (that is even before the arrival of General Hill's division) with the same number of Portuguese, ill-disciplined as I grant they were, would have been a highly advantageous movement; and that Marshal Soult could not have opposed them to the south of the Douro. Take his force, on arriving at Oporto, as high as 18,000 effective men, and it will be seen he could not have brought a force south of the Douro more than equal to the British force alone. Had we advanced as was proposed, and immediately threatened him, it was not possible for him, at a moment when he was in possession of nothing but the town of Oporto; when he had not opened any communication with his corps and park of artillery at Tuy; when the Count D'Amarante, who had recaptured Chaves and passed the Tamega, was pressing on towards Oporto; and when the town itself was full of an inimical and exasperated population: it was not, I say, possible for him, under such circumstances, to have left less than 5000 men to guard it; say 3000 infantry and 1200 cavalry, with a proportion of artillery. Let us take Marshal Soult's 18,000, as consisting of 15,000 infantry and 3000 cavalry,—I give him a full proportion of infantry, as it would be the most advantageous force in the country he was in. The garrison left at Oporto would reduce him to 12,000 infantry and 1300 horse, and we'll say 24 pieces of artillery; as he could not in common prudence leave less than six with the troops in his rear. The English numbers are reckoned rank and file, that is, of fire arms; the French include all officers, non-commissioned officers, drummers, &c.; so that our 12,000 British would be very nearly

equal *in number* to the French. Then, again, there would be the 12,000 Portuguese; and though these, at the time, were really very indifferent troops, yet the enemy must put something to oppose them; and, in estimating that 4000 would be required for this service, we certainly do not state more than is necessary, when we consider that the Portuguese would have the advantage of the countenance and example of the British. Now as to the artillery, it appears by Lieut.-Col. Napier's account, that Soult brought 30 pieces with him to Oporto; and he says, that the British, at the end of March and beginning of April, could not have more than fifteen guns; but in this estimate he has omitted to mention the Portuguese artillery, which, at this period, was by no means inconsiderable, and ready to march. This corps, so far as the mere serving of field-pieces went, was infinitely more advanced in its discipline and capability than the troops of the line, either infantry or cavalry, and could certainly have added twenty-four, or even thirty pieces to the fifteen British. Thus the Allied army would, in every respect, have been superior to any force which Marshal Soult could prudently have brought against them south of the Douro; or, indeed, to his whole 18,000 men, had he abandoned Oporto, and brought them into the field—as the Portuguese, from the beginning, never exhibited any deficiency of courage. It is evident that this was the feeling and opinion of Marshal Soult himself. He never risked any thing beyond a strong advanced guard south of the Douro. This retreated rapidly on the first appearance of the British army; and, a very short time after, that great officer himself retired

with equal precipitation from Oporto. Is it an unfair conclusion, to suppose that, had the Allied army boldly advanced at the moment suggested by Lord Beresford, the same result would have ensued? We will suppose then, that, had the English army, with its ally advanced sooner, Marshal Soult would have withdrawn his troops to the north bank of the Douro; this was the only alternative that remained for him, if he refused hazarding a battle on the south. We will also suppose that the Allies had followed him. Such a movement would have obliged the French commander, unless he retreated, to have kept his forces united. It would have prevented his sending those troops to the Tamega, by which the forces of General Silviera were defeated and dispersed; it would equally have prevented the junction of the forces and materiel at Tuy, and the relief of that place from the Spaniards who were surrounding it; and who, after their success at Vigo, would have been greatly encouraged and augmented. Besides, Lord Beresford had already dispatched General Botilho* from Trasos Montes to the Minho province, to collect the many troops which were then scattered about, and to encourage and feed the insurrection. We should also have had time to furnish and provision Valença, an important fortress on the Minho, and the only one tenable in those parts, which was entirely destitute, and fell, in consequence, into the power of Marshal Soult. Had we thus menaced that General on the Douro, and prevented his sending off detachments to the eastward and northward, we

* The author, in p. 277, notices this officer's being there, and calls him the Insurgent General Bouthielo.

should have had General Silviera's corps pressing closely upon Oporto—we should have had the force from the Minho province, though of a still inferior quality, co-operating to the same effect, from the north—we should have effectually cut off all supplies from the enemy—we should have had time to victual Valençay—Tuy would have been left to its fate—the disasters to Silviera's corps would have been prevented —and I think it evident that, under such a state of things, Soult *could* not, and, judging from his after proceedings, would not, have long remained at Oporto. As I have before said, all these secondary considerations in favour of an earlier movement to Leiria, and thence to Oporto, have been omitted by Lieut.-Col. Napier. But it appears to me no more than just to place them in the balance, for as much as a military reader may think them worth, against the arguments for *not* advancing, which the author has most liberally detailed. But the fact is, that his ignorance of the state of the Tagus, has led him throughout to argue upon a false basis. Had he been accurately informed upon the various circumstances of locality which I have endeavoured to explain, I rather suspect that he would not have yielded so ready an assent to those opinions on the subject, which he has so strenuously endeavoured to support.

I have said, that the advance of the British army to Leiria, within so short a time after Lord Beresford's proposal—in less, I think, than fourteen days—fully proves that his views were not at the moment considered so very unsound or erroneous as Lieut.-Col. Napier has represented. But the historian, sensible that this advance of the British army, so very soon

after its having been recommended, would appear to favour its propriety, adds, as one reason for its adoption, that the measure was pressed upon the British commander with unceasing importunity, and most especially by Marshal Beresford. I certainly cannot undertake to say what may have passed between Marshal Beresford and Sir John Cradock upon this subject. Besides the interview on the 28th, and the letter of the 29th of March, there appears to have been a Council of War held in the first week of April, the date of which I am not informed of.* On all these occasions, I do not doubt but Marshal Beresford uged his opinion with the energy and firmness that distinguish his character; but, that Sir John Cradock should have been swayed by any undue importunity of his, or by any influence except a perception of the wisdom of his scheme, appears to me excessively improbable, if, indeed, the circumstances of the time did not render it impossible. After stating his opinion, as it was his duty to do, and placing that opinion upon record, I can hardly think that Lord Beresford could have acted so inconsistently with his usual habits on such occasions, as to endeavour to extort by importunity a concession, which he had been unable to obtain by argument. But, in fact, was not the thing impossible? Lord Beresford departed from Lisbon on the 8th of April, leaving Sir John Cradock still opposed to his views of advancing to Leiria, and had no further communication with the British commander on the subject, till those very views had been carried

* This Council is mentioned by Lieut.-Col. Napier, p. 262; but he, as usual, gives no dates.

into execution, and they met, between Leiria and Thomar, on the 24th of the same month. The author, however, is right in saying that Marshal Beresford was the only one in the council of war who very decidedly advocated an advance; though I have reason to apprehend that there were shades of difference upon that subject. However, his opinion was eventually acted upon; and looking back impartially upon it, after the lapse of so many years, it is, I think, an opinion which can require no excuse; but which, on the contrary, does the highest credit to his military character.

If, indeed, any further argument was required to shew the soundness of the Marshal's views, the most final and conclusive argument might be found, in the conduct of the newly arrived commander. The advance of Sir John Cradock to Leiria had so far justified the opinion of Lord Beresford, as to shew that no danger to Lisbon was to be apprehended from its adoption. Indeed, the historian has lost sight of that apprehension, and appears to entertain considerable doubts respecting the soundness of his own judgment in that point. He labours hard, and he feels considerable difficulty, in reconciling the decision and the acts of the Duke of Wellington, with the line of conduct which he had been previously supporting. He says (and mark his words), "Sir Arthur's plans were, however, neither hastily adopted, nor recklessly hurried forward: like Cradock, he felt the danger of removing far from Lisbon, while Victor was on the Alemtejo frontier; and he anxiously weighed his own resources against those at the enemy's disposal." I shall first observe,

that no one, I believe, will accuse our great General of "hurrying recklessly on;" nor do I comprehend why such a phrase is introduced; but as to this feeling about not advancing too far from Lisbon, which is pressed upon the reader's attention in the above quotation, I fancy that the anxiety which the author has here ascribed to the Duke of Wellington will not be borne out by facts. On his Grace's arrival in the Tagus, he found the army already at Leiria; and, as to his plans not being *hastily* adopted, if such a word is meant to convey any thing like *imprudently*, it is impossible for any thing to be more true than the author's statement; but that his plans were very *quickly* adopted, Lieut.-Col. Napier has himself established beyond a doubt, by printing in his Appendix the Duke of Wellington's letter to Lord Castlereagh. The Duke arrived at Lisbon, as related by the author, on the 22d of April. He wrote to Sir John Cradock and Lord Beresford on the 23d; on the 24th, before he had seen either, that is probably within forty-eight hours of his landing in Portugal, he writes to Lord Castlereagh, "*I intend to move upon Soult, so soon as I can make some arrangements upon which I can depend, for the defence of the Tagus, either to impede or delay Victor's progress, in case he should come in while I am absent.*" Nothing then can be more clear, than that this plan was *quickly* determined upon. The Duke of Wellington did not, as insinuated by the author, feel *much alarmed* by the danger of removing far from Lisbon. No part of his Grace's letter justifies such an assertion; unless, indeed, the mention of precautionary measures for the security of the Tagus may

bear such a construction; but the security of the Tagus had not been previously overlooked. It is true, as the author observes, that this great General weighed his means; and he found that he could strengthen the Tagus frontier, and yet retain quite force enough to march against Soult. Now, it has been said, that he decided upon the line he would adopt within forty-eight hours after his arrival in Portugal; and that he was not very long in putting his plan into operation, will appear very evident from a comparison of dates. He was *personally* in Coimbra on the 2d of May, and *all his army* were there united on the 5th. Allowing then three days' march from Leiria to Coimbra, the troops must have commenced their march from the former town about four days after the decision announced by the Duke of Wellington to Lord Castlereagh on the 24th. That there was nothing in these quick and energetic proceedings, which had not been maturely weighed and considered, and determined on sound principles, the result has most distinctly proved; yet, though the author's expressions are literally true, when he says, that "Sir Arthur's plans were neither hastily adopted nor recklessly hurried forward," the notion which they are calculated, and apparently intended to convey, is, I apprehend, entirely erroneous. This sentence is put forward as a kind of out-work to cover the author's retreat from his former opinions. As Lieut.-Col. Napier finds it convenient to approve on the 24th, the course of operation which he disapproved on the 23rd, of April, he is anxious to make it appear to the reader that the Duke of Wellington was himself in suspense

respecting it; that it was adopted after a world of painful deliberation; and that there were strong counterbalancing arguments in existence, which might have persuaded him to an opposite course:—"His plans were not *hastily* adopted:" but where are the author's proofs of this? How does it appear that the Duke of Wellington ever, for an instant, entertained a doubt as to the line he would pursue? Can any practical military reader imagine a decision more rapidly formed, or more energetically carried into execution? It was characteristic of the man. His quick and comprehensive mind caught at a single glance the whole posture of affairs, and as instantly perceived the manner in which they ought to be dealt with; and he as rapidly resolved and entered upon that dispatch of the measures which his judgment pointed out as necessary. It must be remembered that the scheme, thus instantly adopted and acted upon by the Duke of Wellington, was the very same which Lord Beresford had recommended before his arrival: and, sanctioned by such an authority, it can require no further vindication against the cavils of Lieut.-Col. Napier.

It appears to me, that the historian of the Peninsular War never feels very easy under the opinions he has adopted. Although he is not aware of the false basis on which much of his reasoning is founded, the labour with with which he supports his position, evinces the difficulties in which he feels himself involved by it. At one time,* the author makes the British commander "fixed in some favourable position, at a prudent distance from Lisbon, where he

* Page 156

could wait for the reinforcements he expected from England." What authority he had for the expectation of these reinforcements, I am wholly unable to discover. They are not enumerated, or even hinted at, in Sir John Cradock's letter of the 29th of March; and the reader of his History must at once observe, that, in defence of this very same position, the author several times insists on the uncertainty in which the British commander was left, as to the intentions of his Majesty's Ministers with regard to Portugal, and his doubt whether they meant to defend it or not. I need not say this involves an absurd contradiction. If reinforcements were expected in addition to those which had arrived even before the 29th March, there could be no doubt of the intentions of the British Ministry; and yet the author alleges,* as one of the causes which, on the Duke of Wellington's arrival, made a change in the circumstances, that the intentions of the British government until then "had been doubtful; they were no longer so." To whom were they doubtful? Surely the British General, who had seen an officer so recently sent from this country to take the command of the native troops; who had lately received considerable reinforcements; and who was waiting for more, to commence offensive operations:—Surely it is not possible that this General could, at the same time, be, as Lieut.-Col. Napier has described him, paralysed by doubts as to the intention of the Government in England.

I will here take an opportunity of correcting an error of the author's, though it has no reference to the main object of my pamphlet, which arises from

* Page 276.

his misunderstanding a sentence in the Duke of Wellington's letter to Lord Castlereagh of the 24th April. Under the influence of this mistake, he proceeds to pass the censures of history upon the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers. "Sir A. Wellesley," says Lieut.-Col. Napier, "landed on the 22d April, and on the 24th signified to the British Ministers, that, *affairs being in the condition contemplated by them, it was his intention to assume the command of the army.*" A circumstance worthy of attention, as indicating that the defence of Portugal was even then considered a secondary object and of uncertain promise. The deliverance of the Peninsula was never due to the foresight and perseverance of the English Ministers, but to the firmness and skill of the British Generals, and to the courage of troops, whom no dangers could daunt, and no hardships dishearten, while they remedied the eternal errors of the Cabinet.*

Here the Ministers, the objects of the historian's lavish condemnation, are the victims of his own misapprehension. When the Duke of Wellington spoke of "affairs being in the condition contemplated by them," I can venture to say, that no allusion whatever was designed to the political state of the country, or to our future transactions there, or to any question whether it was or was not to be defended. His expressions had merely a personal reference to the condition in which he found the commander of the British forces on his arrival. If the Duke of Wellington had found Sir John Cradock pursuing any military operation, what-

* Page 264.

ever stage that operation might be in, the government at home had consented that the command was not to be taken out of his hands; but that he should enjoy the credit of completing the movement which he had projected. If, for instance, Sir John Cradock had decided on following up the recommendation of Marshal Beresford, and proceeded from Leiria to attack Soult at Oporto, he then would have been found in a military operation; he would not have been interrupted in the execution of it; "affairs would not have been in the condition contemplated by the British Ministers;" and I have every reason to believe that, under such circumstances, the Duke of Wellington would have returned to England. But on his arrival, he found, "*as had been contemplated in England*," that military operations were suspended; that no active measure was immediately intended; and he, therefore, says to the King's Ministers, that, "*finding affairs in the condition contemplated by them*, it was his intention to assume the command of the army." Thus the only question was, whether the future operations in the Peninsula were to be carried on by Sir J. Cradock, or the Duke of Wellington; and not the question supposed by the author, whether they were, or were not, to be carried on at all.

The author continues "not that he (the Duke of Wellington) wavered between offensive and defensive movements." True, and this corroborates what I have endeavoured to prove, and, if it agrees with the letter, does not at all agree with the spirit, of the first part of the paragraph,—"for a General of his discernment could not fail to perceive that if the

French were acting upon any concerted plan, the false march of Lapisse upon Merida had marred their combinations, by placing a whole nation, with all its fortresses and all its forces, whether insurgents, regular troops, or auxiliaries, between the armies of Victor and Soult, and that neither concert nor communication could longer exist between those Marshals." This passage is very flowingly writ; it is richly ornamented with "all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war;" and it must necessarily impose upon those readers who are unacquainted with the country, and ignorant of the relative positions in which the several corps of the contending parties were stationed. Leiut.-Col. Napier speaks of a whole nation, with all its fortresses and all its forces, disposed in most formidable array to oppose the enemy;—but I really know nothing of any fortresses, and as little of all the forces which would necessarily have impeded his progress. If Victor marched by Caceras to Abrantes, he would pass by Portalegri, and leave Elvas on his left, which (if he passed through the Alemtejo) is the only fortress that would in any manner interfere with his line. If, on the other hand, he recrossed the Tagus at Alcantara, or Almaraz, or both,—the only places, in fact, at which he could have passed,—and entered by Lower Beira—which, as the author has justly stated, is a very bad route for an army—then there was no fortress at all between him and Marshal Soult: for, notwithstanding the author's account of Abrantes, there was not, at this period, the vestige of a fortification at that place. And, lastly, if the enemy had chosen to enter by Upper Beira, he could

even then have left Almeida greatly to his right, which is the only fortress in that direction. All this was equally and even more decisively the case had Lapisse remained on the Beira frontier, to which, indeed, he could have returned as easily as he had departed. I perfectly agree with the author that this forward movement of Lapisse was a false one. But I do not agree with him, that had the British force (the auxiliary he alludes to) remained at Lisbon as he advocates, it would have been between Victor and Soult. To elucidate this,—though it can scarcely require it,—we will suppose with the author that the Tagus is fordable at all seasons of the year; that Victor has passed it between Villa Franca and Abrantes, below Villa Franca any common map will shew the impossibility of its being passed; and that the British occupied their old position of Saccavem and Lumiar. How is the British army placed between the two corps in question? Victor would find it in a retired position near Lisbon, from 60 to 80 miles to his left; and by occupying the right bank of the Tagus from the Zezere to Galgaò, thence to Torres Novas and Rio Mayor, might either advance to Santarem, or wait the junction of Soult; while the British,—to which the Portuguese at and near Thomar must have retired,—would have been cut off from all the northern provinces. So much for Lieut.-Col. Napier's central position;—Lisbon, though the pivot of operations, as the place from which our resources must be derived, was not, as I have before said, under the circumstances of the time and situation of the enemy's corps, a central position; it was, on the contrary, a very retired

position; and had our army remained there, the whole country would have been left open to the enemy to communicate with each other, or form their junction immediately, when and where they pleased. I repeat, and I think it possible that Lieut.-Col. Napier, now he is better informed, will agree with me, that the emplacement of the Allied forces where Lord Beresford had always recommended, if it could effect no more, at least effected this: it prevented Victor and Soult from attempting a junction without exposing themselves to the danger of being separately attacked; and it would not render Lapisse's march on Abrantes the less imprudent. To which it may be added, that the army was there well placed to support the troops left for the defence of the Tagus, as well as to take advantage of whatever fortunate occurrences might happen in the north; while, as I have shewn, it could not be turned, or cut off from its communication with Lisbon.

The author continues, "Soult's offensive also was evidently exhausted."—It might be insufficient, but I cannot see how it could be exhausted more than on its arrival at Oporto. During his residence there he had been enabled to get his artillery, detachments and invalids from Tuy and other places, and had had time to rest and refresh his troops.—"He (Soult) might establish himself firmly in the provinces beyond the Douro, but he could not alone force his way to Lisbon, a distance of 200 miles, in a season when the waters were full, and through a country tangled with rivers, mountains, and defiles."—I agree fully in the author's conclusion, but not in the reasons on which

he grounds it. There is something curious in his discovering that these, comparatively trifling rivers, are all *full* at this season of the year, after having described the Tagus as every where fordable. But where are these mountains, which Lieut.-Col. Napier has placed between Oporto and Lisbon? There are some small, and, at times in the winter season, difficult rivers between Coimbra and Oporto; but as their course is short, so the rain ceasing, their force is soon expended, and the impediments they present are of short duration. The great difficulties, offered by these rivers, and by the nature of the ground, are between Oporto and the Vouga. There is here a tract of difficult country, if well defended; but this was all in the undisputed possession of Marshal Soult. His advanced posts were on the Vouga: and he could, when he pleased, have passed that river and arrived at Coimbra. Now, from that place to the lines, the Duke of Wellington did not find, on his retiring after the battle of Bussaco, any position which he thought sufficiently good to occupy for a day. It is unnecessary, therefore, I conceive, to say any thing more respecting the nature of that part of the ground. No preparation was at this time made where the lines were afterwards established; and Lieut.-Col. Napier might have added to the other reasons which he has alleged for preferring an attack on Marshal Soult to one on Marshal Victor, this, which was the real and substantial reason of the Duke's movement, and which the historian has failed to mention: that if the army had been taken across the Tagus, unless a considerably greater detachment of troops than was necessary to defend the river against Victor had been

left behind, Lisbon would have been left open to Soult, who had no real obstacle in his way, except the presence of the troops, between Oporto and the capital. For, it must be observed, that the discontents and conspiracies in his corps, though known early in May to the British chiefs, were on the 24th of April, as unknown to them, as they were to Marshal Soult himself, and consequently would have had no influence in preventing his marching against Lisbon. Indeed, from the time of his arrival in Oporto, nothing could have prevented his adopting this measure, except his consciousness of the insufficiency of his means. It is in the next paragraph that the author says *the Tagus is fordable in almost all seasons*:* this, as I have abundantly shewn, is an error of the first importance; and the foundation being so frail, all the reasoning that is erected on it must necessarily fall. Marshal Victor could no more have passed the Tagus then, than Marshal Massena could in 1811. But the author affirms, that "a movement of Victor's, or even the semblance of it, towards the river, would perforce have drawn the Allied armies on that side; and that then Soult coming down the Mondego, might, from thence, connect his operations with Victor by the line of the Zezere, or advance at once on Lisbon, as occasion offered." The Allied army—posted as Lord Beresford advised, and as it was posted on the 24th of April, and having the Tagus defended—would completely prevent such movements by the enemy. Soult would have been attacked singly, with vastly more advantage than at Oporto; while Victor would have been incapable of assisting him. And,

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though our author has not shewn how they could communicate to arrange this co-operation, which they never did nor ever could, I am quite at a loss to see how their operations could have been carried on by the line of the Zezere. This river has no communication with, or approximation to the Mondego: they both receive their source on opposite sides of the same mountain, the Estrella, and flow from it in opposite directions; the Mondego descending from its west side, and running southward and westward; and the Zezere, descending from its east side, and running southward until it falls into the Tagus on its right, and consequently its northernly bank. But Victor was to the south of the Tagus; and how, in this position, he was to communicate with Soult, who was far away to the north of it, by the line of two rivers that have no connexion with each other, it remains for Lieut.-Col. Napier to explain.—It's a riddle!—"*Davus sum non Œdipus.*" But all this, if practicable at all, was equally practicable whilst the army remained in Lisbon or its neighbourhood. In that position, being about 70 miles from the spot where the Zezere falls into the Tagus, it could have offered no resistance either to Soult's march to the Zezere, or to the Tagus, or to whatever point he might have fixed upon for covering Marshal Victor's passage over the river. Yet, even then, it would have been found a very difficult and a very tedious operation, though unmolested by an enemy and assisted by a friend.

The author, in summing up the resources which the English General possessed on the 24th of April, to enable him to undertake the campaign, begins

with "his central position." Does he mean his own so much admired central position near Lisbon, or the advanced central position now occupied by the Allies? or has he two central positions? This I don't understand. He then proceeds to the strength of the British army, which it is clear he stretches to its utmost, though I will not impugn it. He then takes the Portuguese troops of the line, which he states at 16,000 armed and organized. He might have represented these in a manner more favourable to his view of the case; and, therefore, taking the two together, he would, perhaps, on the whole be rather below the mark as to the number of our forces. He next mentions Trant's and Silviera's corps. Trant's could not be called a corps, nor was it ever intended it should be one. That officer had been sent by Lord Beresford from Lisbon with instructions appropriate to the existing circumstances. He did good service; but he had very few troops under his command. There were next, the militia and ordonanças, which the author styles, and not very improperly with regard to the period of which he is speaking, the insurgent force; though the militia (of which Silviera's corps was mostly composed, for he had but two infantry regiments of the line with him) was not actually such. He, in the fifth place, mentions the fortresses, and among them he includes Abrantes, which, at this time, was no fortress at all, nor any thing more than a very strong position. He then speaks of our marine resources, and sums up the whole with the assistance which might be expected from the army of Cuesta. I do not think he has attached more importance to this last point than it deserves; but why should Lieut.-

Col. Napier *now* begin to count upon it, when, at a former period, not a month indeed before, he denied that Lord Beresford's proposition could be in any degree supported by the consideration of this means of strength, and absolutely asserted that no advantage whatever could be derived from it. He did not indeed object so much to the inefficiency of the force, as to the personal feelings and qualities of Cuesta, which were described as being of such a character as would necessarily destroy the usefulness of any body of men that might be entrusted to his command. This force was still at the disposal of the same General: will the author condescend to inform us in what manner the personal feelings and qualities of Cuesta had changed within the course of a little month, so as to render those troops valuable in the end of April, which were entirely valueless in the end of March? In estimating this force at 35,000, the historian has not diminished its numbers; but it appears only 25,000 were at hand. This is immaterial to the present question. The point of numbers has nothing to do with my argument, which is merely to shew that Lieut.-Col. Napier writes from prejudice, and not from reason; that the army, which is inefficient to day, becomes efficient to morrow, exactly as it suits the purpose of the moment; and that the General, who—when it is desired to discredit Marshal Beresford's proposition,—is represented as unworthy of his trust; when it is wished to commend the movement of the Duke of Wellington, becomes suddenly metamorphosed, by the alchemy of this ingenious writer, into a person not in any way disqualified for his station. I take it for granted that this is all right and proper;

but to plain men, not versed in the intricate paths of the modern school of trading literati, and who are content to read books instead of writing them, it certainly bears a very extraordinary aspect. The author says,* "in case of Victor's entering by the Alemtejo, Cuesta had promised to follow closely in his rear." This promise was not made previously to the arrival of the Duke of Wellington, or it would have held good for the advance of the army from Leiria while under the command of Sir J. Cradock; it could not have been made between the time of his arrival and the 24th of April, when he resolved on an advance; it therefore could have had no influence in determining the Duke of Wellington to operate against Oporto, and is consequently, wholly inapposite to the subject in question. Besides, it is quite contradictory to all that the author had previously stated with regard to the disposition of Cuesta, when arguing against the soundness of Lord Beresford's proposition.

But having touched upon the subject of General Cuesta, I shall proceed to shew, as I think I can, that the historian's "*reasoning*, on this point, *is evidently unsound.*" "It was impossible," he tells us, "to reckon upon Cuesta's aid in keeping Victor employed, he was personally inimical to the English: and his principal object was to gain time for the increase and discipline of his own forces." Now, admitting that these feelings existed, and that they would operate as the author has asserted,—a supposition which, in passages already cited, the author has himself contradicted,—yet I would ask him whether he can possibly suppose that, if Cuesta had seen an oppor-

* Page 269

tunity of engaging Marshal Victor, he would not without any thought or wish of benefiting the English —for his credit's sake, from motives of fair personal vanity, from an honourable feeling of ambition, and, above all, for his own country's cause, have taken the best advantage of that opportunity? The battle of Medellin gives a most undeniable and satisfactory answer to the question. It not only shews that Cuesta, whatever may have been his disposition towards the English, was perfectly sincere in his hatred of the French; but it also disproves the view of Cuesta's object, which Lieut-Col. Napier has given in the latter part of the last citation. So far from its "being his principal object to gain time for the increase and discipline of his forces," at the very moment in question, Cuesta had voluntarily come down, with his whole force, to seek Victor, and to give him battle. For it must be remembered that all this reasoning of the historian has reference to opinions formed on the 29th March, 1809, when the battle of Medellin was unknown at Lisbon.

But even putting Cuesta out of the question, and admitting that he would have acted according to the strange views of the author, there is another principal person, and one of considerable moment too, who has been entirely overlooked;—I mean Marshal Victor. Ought not the historian to have turned to him, and considered what view he would most probably have taken of the state of affairs; and how he would have acted under them? The author had every advantage in shewing the nature of that commander's views, as he wrote his History when he could not fail of being informed of what they really

were. Marshal Victor could never, in the first place, have been acquainted with the private feelings of Cuesta; and even had he heard of them, the attempt of Cuesta at Medellin would have sufficiently informed him, that, in the mind of the Spanish General, hostility to England did not, by any means, imply a kindly feeling towards France. If the Spanish General had been successful in that battle, which he most assuredly desired, and was not far from being, although the interests of the British had never entered into his contemplations, what greater benefit could he possibly have done them? Thus then Victor, the movement of whose force was the only thing, after all, in which the British had really any concern, would be compelled to act militarily, and to guard against any attack from Cuesta; so that, as long as Cuesta and his force kept a position to the north of the Sierra Morena, and towards the Spanish Estremadura, Victor would, in proportion to the numbers and condition of that force and its means of obtaining reinforcements, be kept at bay, and incapable of pursuing his ulterior aims. The French General shewed, by passing the Tagus in search of Cuesta, that he considered it necessary to get rid of him entirely, before he undertook any measures against Portugal. Any military observer, at the time, after Victor's passing the Tagus, and both previously to and after the battle of Medellin; would have said; If "Marshal Victor has any hostile intentions against Portugal, he will not proceed in them till he has entirely delivered himself of Cuesta." Nothing, I think, can be more clear than this: but when the author, writing with the fullest knowledge that the

French General was acting contrary to the instructions he had received from Buonaparte, and taking upon himself a great responsibility—a responsibility increased by his being fully aware that other Generals were, by the same instructions, combined in operations with him, whom he was, in a great degree, leaving to their fate; when any military man, like Lieutenant-Colonel Napier, is writing with a knowledge of these things, it seems natural for him to conclude that so great an officer as Marshal Victor would not, under such circumstances and such a responsibility, have left Buonaparte's orders unexecuted, unless he possessed some very cogent reason which might justify his apparent disregard of them. That reason could be no other than his conceiving it most imprudent to comply with his orders whilst Cuesta's force was threatening his flank or rear, if he attempted to make an entry into Portugal. Thus, though Lord Beresford had originally surmised that it was intended for the three corps of Soult and Victor and Lapisse to act combinedly against Portugal; it was equally just to see, after the movement of Victor, that that General, whatever his instructions might be, would not attempt to carry them into effect, whilst Cuesta, with a Spanish army, was in his front, or so immediately in his neighbourhood. It was not, I conceive, then, on such very unsound reasoning, that Marshal Beresford proposed to take advantage of this posture of affairs, and to cripple one of the parties before the other could, or would come to his assistance. It was the view taken and acted upon by our great Captain, on the very first glance at the state of things, as is manifest from his letter to Lord Castlereagh.

I shall conclude my remarks on those passages against Lord Beresford, which are found in this part of Colonel Napier's History, with some observations on the change of circumstances which, as he pretends, had taken place between the 29th March and the 24th April. He informs us,* that "when the British commander refused to advance, the Portuguese troops were insubordinate and disorganized; they were now obedient and improved in discipline." If this was really the case, which it was, what can palliate the injustice and partiality of the author, or excuse the cold, slighting, contumelious manner in which his work has treated the firm, energetic, and indefatigable commander, who, in the space of one short month, was capable of effecting so extraordinary a change in the character of a whole army! This at least, despite of all controversy, was the sole and entire act of Marshal Beresford. In this month, he had surmounted the greatest difficulties, which he either had or could have to encounter. He had to contend with and overmaster them, while the enemy was in the country, and might be hourly expected to advance. Surely, to any candid and unbiassed historian, this victory over a tumultuous and undisciplined rabble,—this creation, in a space of time incredibly short, of an orderly and effective military force out of the confused and jarring elements of a lawless mob,—evinces a knowledge of mankind; a skill in the various principles by which the human heart is actuated; and a facility in influencing and directing them, which have always been respected as talents of the

* Page 275.

most valuable kind, and ranked among the exclusive characteristics of the highest class of minds. The possession of these qualities by Marshal Beresford might have shewn Lieut.-Col. Napier, had not that gentleman's intellectual vision been so thickly offuscated by the mists of party prejudices, that the Commander who had achieved such a work, would not be found incapable of the greatest things; and it might also have taught him "to assume a virtue if he had it not," and exhibit some little shew of humility; when he, a mere soldier of theory, presumed to discuss the abilities, the opinions, and the conduct of so able and experienced an officer.

The second point, in which the author considers the circumstances as having changed, is that "the English army had scarcely any cavalry, and that four regiments had since been added."* Be it so—I have already admitted that the British commander, on the 29th of March, might have many reasons for forming an opinion different from Lord Beresford's; but I do not think that, in general, the historian has furnished him with the best.

The third point is, "In the middle of April, Cuesta was only gathering the wrecks of his forces after Medellin; he was now at the head of 35,000 men."†

I think there cannot be a stronger proof that the author feels conscious how defective his own arguments are, than that which he has exhibited in the above quotation. Why does he so lightly slip into the middle of April?—most evidently because the 29th of March would not have served his purpose.

* Page 275 † Page 276.

Here, again, in stating a matter of fact, the author has so arranged his materials, that the reader's mind receives a most erroneous impression with regard to the state of circumstances, as they must have appeared to Lord Beresford and Sir J. Cradock, at the moment the question of the advance to Oporto was agitated between them.

It is very true, that in the middle of April, "Cuesta was gathering together his forces after his defeat at Medellin;" but why is this put in contrast with the 29th of March? At that time, the English Generals were not aware of the defeat of Cuesta, but supposed that, instead of being employed in gathering together his dispersed forces, he was still keeping Marshal Victor in check with an unbroken and highly animated army. It is on the posture of affairs, as they appeared to the officers assembled in Lisbon up to the 29th of March, that all reasoning on this subject should be grounded. What might be the state of things a fortnight after, or even a day after Sir John Cradock's refusal, is nothing at all to the purpose. As far as Cuesta's army was concerned, the argument for an advance was stronger on the 29th of March than at the time approved by Lieut.-Col. Napier; though very shortly after the battle, notwithstanding its results, the state of the belligerents, as far as that state might effect our judgments or operations, became pretty nearly the same as before it; indeed, Marshal Victor's intention of attending to Cuesta's movements became more apparent.

The fourth and last point on which our author grounds his pretence of a change of circumstances,

is, "The intentions of the British Government had been doubtful, they were no longer so."* I have already alluded to this subject. I never did, nor do I now believe, that the intentions of the Ministry were at all doubtful; or, at least, any more so than the chances and circumstances of war might unavoidably render them. For example, when Lord Beresford was sent out to take the command of the Portuguese army, it was known in London that Marshal Soult was then on the Minho; that he was attempting his way into Portugal; and that he might possibly have reached Lisbon before the English General arrived there. Had such been the case, though it was decidedly the intention of the Ministers to defend Portugal, as far as was wise and prudent; yet they could not surely have been blamed had they desisted, on finding themselves deprived of that advantageous position which they had been in possession of, when their decision had been originally made. They could not, with justice, have been accused of changing their intentions, because they ceased to prosecute them, as a forlorn hope, after all the circumstances had changed on which their intentions had been grounded.

I shall wind up my notice of this part of the author's History with a quotation, which will be found the best commentary that can be made on his Lisbon position; and in which I entirely coincide with him, more especially in its conclusion:—"The Spanish Government and the Spanish Generals were importunate for offensive movements, and lavish in their promises of support; and the English

* Page 276.

General was as eager, for he was at the head of gallant troops, his foot was on the path of victory, and he felt that if the Duke of Belluno was not quickly disabled, the British army, threatened on both flanks, would, as in the case of Sir J. Cradock, be obliged to remain in some defensive position near Lisbon, until it became the scorn of the French, and an object of suspicion and hatred to the Spanish and Portuguese people." How enviable and excellent a position! and, if this was its character under the Duke of Wellington, in what respect, and on what account, was it to be considered as more favourable under any other commander?

It is almost unnecessary to pursue the author any further on Lord Beresford's account. But, perhaps, if I were to leave any thing concerning that distinguished officer uncommented upon, it might be considered that I acquiesced in Lieut.-Col. Napier's relation and conclusions. I shall therefore take a hasty notice of what remains, and correct some errors in his statement, as to what he calls corps, and the numbers of the troops which were with his Lordship on the Douro. If Lieut.-Col. Napier chooses to refer to Marshal Beresford's orders of the day, in the volume of 'Ordems do dia, for 1809,' he will find the corps brigaded, in the order of the 11th of May, given at Lamego. I have already stated, that Col. Trant's was not a corps; and the troops he commanded, on the advance from the Vouga, could not have exceeded 1,000, or 1,200; but I cannot be accurate as to the numbers.

Sir Robert Wilson merely commanded a brigade; the composition of which may be seen in the order

above referred to. He belonged to the corps under Lord Beresford's own orders; he was to form the intended advance of that corps; and, under that view, was sent forward from Coimbra, in the manner correctly stated by the author:—but his was not a corps, and still less was it a separate one. This, with the following brigades, formed Lord Beresford's *corps d'armée*.

Silviera, who (as Lieut.-Col. Napier will see by the same order, was brigaded in like manner) commanded the two regular regiments he had with him, the 12th and 24th, with the two militia regiments of Bragança and Moncorvo; there was one brigade of militia, under Br.-General Mozinho; there were the brigades of Major-General Bacelar, and of General Lopes de Souza; there was also the British brigade, under General Tilson; and the whole corps together amounted to 12,000 men, which, in one place, the author, writing from erroneous information, states at 30,000. That is, that all those corps united would amount to such a force. He does not, in truth, ever make the corps which he places under Lord Beresford's immediate orders, amount to 12,000; but he gives large corps to some of the Generals, who, in reality, only commanded brigades. I merely make these observations for the sake of the truth of history, and that these circumstances may be stated as they really were. When Silviera acted, alone, in Tras os Montes, he commanded a division there, having with his own brigade that of Br.-General Mozinho, which was composed of militia regiments of that province, with some cavalry and light artillery. But all were now included in the force

under Lord Beresford's immediate orders, and amounted, as I have said, to about 12,000 men.

Lieut.-Col. Napier's account of the adventure of Major Dulong, at the Ponte Novo, near Ruivaens, is, I have no doubt, correct, as to the orders which Dulong received from Marshal Soult, and the danger which both those officers conceived to be attached to the enterprise in hand. The relation given of it by Lieutenant-Col. Napier, is, I know, taken from the French accounts of the day; but, as for the resistance of the Portuguese, they made none; not a shot was fired. There was a small party of peasantry on the spot, who had been placed there by Lord Beresford's aide-de-camp: these,—who had been selected from the few that would remain after hearing of the approach of the French army,—had all, without any precaution, fallen asleep. In this situation they were surprised; and, with the exception of one man who got off badly wounded, and gave the alarm in Ruivaens just in time for the English aide-de-camp to escape, they were all massacred. The Portuguese made no resistance whatever; a circumstance easily accounted for, as they were merely peasantry, and armed as they could best provide themselves for the occasion. As to the reason, which the author has ascribed to the Portuguese, for not destroying the bridge, that they were loth to prevent the French from retreating: if they reasoned so far, they might have proceeded one step further, and argued, that if the French got away they would return again; but that, if the bridge was destroyed, they would be got rid of for ever. This would have been a much better, and more simple mode of reasoning. But these poor

people had no such ideas. They had a decided hatred to the French, and a great regard for their own lives; and they, consequently, wished to inflict as much injury as they could on the enemy, without exposing themselves to a great deal of danger. Such is the short and natural explanation of their conduct; but historians are very seldom satisfied with simple causes. The bridge of Miserella had for its defenders the same class of persons, actuated by the same desires and apprehensions. This will account for the trifling defence made there. It appears, as stated in a Memoir written and published by an officer of Soult's army, that the gallant Major Dulong and seventeen others, were wounded at this spot. As the post is a strong one, it is clear that the defenders could have done little more than have discharged their arms and fled.

Lieut.-Col. Napier says,* "There was evidently a failure in the operations of Marshal Beresford; Soult did not reach Salamonde till the 15th, and his rear-guard was still there on the evening of the 16th. Beresford was in person at Chaves, on the 16th, and his troops reached that place early on the morning of the 17th; Soult passed Montalegre on the 18th, but, from Chaves to that place is only one march." I really do not see, even admitting the correctness of his statements, that Lieut.-Col. Napier has made out his assertion. If Lord Beresford's troops arrived at Chaves on the 17th, it was after having performed their day's march. Now, would Lieut.-Col. Napier, as a fair and unprejudiced man, have recommended, with the weather in the state which he has himself

* Page 306.

described,—with the roads in that miserable condition which such weather necessarily entails—with such very young troops as the Portuguese at that time were—with all the difficulties of procuring provision, forage, transport, &c.; not to mention the many other impediments that frequently intervene to prevent a General from acting as he might desire; would Lieut.-Col. Napier—had he been upon the spot—seriously have recommended to Lord Beresford to proceed another day's march, after one of considerable length and difficulty had just been completed? It is only by those who were on the spot at the time, that a sound judgment on such matters can possibly be formed.

The historian continues—"Again Marshal Beresford was in possession of Amarante, on the 13th,* and, as there was an excellent map of the province in existence, he must have known the importance of Salamonde, and that there were roads through it to Mondin and Cavez, shorter than by Guimaraens and Chaves. It is true that Silviera was sent to occupy Ruivaens and Melgacy," (Melgassa, the author means), "but he executed his orders slowly, and Miserella was neglected. Major Warre, an officer of the Marshal's staff, endeavoured, indeed, to break down the bridges of Ponte Nova and Ruivaens; and it was by his exertions that the peasants, surprised at the former, had been collected; but he had only a single dragoon with him, and was without powder to execute that important task."

In the after part of the same paragraph, the historian says, "It is undoubted that Soult owed his

* Pages 306, 307.

safety to the failure in breaking the bridges: and it does appear, that if Major Warre had been supplied with the necessary escort, he would have effectually destroyed them." The facts stated by Lieut.-Col. Napier are all correct, nor are the conclusions he draws incorrect; for, though Lord Beresford, I apprehend, neither then knew of such a map, nor has ever since seen such a map as the author has described, he was fully aware of the importance of Salamonde, should the enemy pass that way, as he must have done, or have proceeded to Melgassa on the Minho. After possessing Amarante, on the morning of the 13th, Lord Beresford pushed his advanced posts and patrols on the roads of Guimaraens and Penafiel. It was on the 14th that those upon the latter road fell in with the destroyed guns and baggage of Soult; the report of which was communicated at head quarters, on the afternoon of the same day. This was the first hint which Lord Beresford received of the event that had taken place at Oporto; and, perceiving that Soult had taken the route to Braga, he instantly despatched his aide-de-camp, and a commanding officer of the ordonanças of those districts, to assemble the latter, and to adopt every measure for destroying the bridges leading out of the Salamonde pass. The aide-de-camp was only accompanied by an orderly, because he was directed to go in all haste, and informed that troops would immediately follow him. It was desired and expected that he would procure the materials necessary for the destruction of the bridges in the neighbouring villages; as he could not possibly have gone with the expedition required, if he had taken intrenching

tools and powder with him. Lord Beresford's next and immediate measure was to send for General Silviera, but though his first messenger found him, he was obliged to send two others; and a couple of hours elapsed before he attended his Lordship's summons. The English Commander was naturally highly indignant at such delay. He so expressed himself on his arrival, and desired that his brigade should be instantly marched by Mondin to Salamonde. To the utter astonishment of Lord Beresford, Silviera—who had now joined him for the first time, and who was a mere Guerilla Chief, possessing few military ideas, and yet hankering after an independent command—informed him that it had already marched, and was, by his own directions, at that moment on the route to Chaves. This, from the very camp which his Lordship commanded in person, and while he was actually on the spot, may serve to shew the notions of military discipline which existed among the officers whom Lord Beresford had to deal with. His Lordship, as may readily be supposed, felt and expressed himself strongly. General Silviera became very much alarmed. After making his submission, he said that the head of his column could scarcely yet have passed the spot, at which the Mondin road separates from that of Chaves; and that, if he followed them immediately, their route might yet be turned. This he was directed to do without the least loss of time. General Silviera also received instructions to proceed to Salamonde; and, if the French were marching by that route, he was directed to destroy all the bridges, and defend the passes, both on the road to Chaves and to Montalegre; but if, on the other hand, they

had gone towards Malgassa, he was desired to put forth every energy, and endeavour to head them at that point. Silviera left Lord Beresford, with the avowed intention of executing these orders. He did not obey them; he never turned his troops on the Mondin road, or towards Salamonde. He, indeed, with his aide-de-camp and two orderlies, proceeded some distance in that direction; but he never went near the places which his commander had indicated.

Early on the 15th, Lord Beresford left Amarante, on his way to Chaves, and overtook General Silviera's division. He had believed these troops to be by this time far advanced on their road to Mondin; and I need not say, that his surprise and vexation were extreme at thus encountering them in an opposite direction. Silviera himself had gone to a small village between the roads from Salamonde to Chaves and Montalegre, but which was equally out of the way of both.

The author appears to have had some intimation of this, as he says* "Silviera did not move either in the direction or with the celerity required of him by Beresford; there seems to have been a misunderstanding between them." The only misunderstanding that subsisted between these officers has been related; it originated in the unjustifiable conduct of Silviera. The author says truly, that "there was a failure in the operations of Marshal Beresford;" but if he intends to insinuate by this expression any censure upon the conduct of that officer, his censure is evidently unjust. I cannot conceive how either he or any other military man can ascribe that *failure* to

* Page 307.

Marshal Beresford himself. It appears to me that he, in every respect, adopted the measures that were most suitable to the occasion.

The Duke of Wellington, in his dispatch from Oporto, states that he had sent orders to Marshal Beresford for marching troops as above described, who, he adds,—"according to a dispatch just received from him, has anticipated my directions." We have then the Duke of Wellington's authority to prove that Lord Beresford's view, and the orders which he gave, were proper and judicious. It is impossible to secure on all occasions the correct execution of orders. Lord Beresford found,* indeed, that the aide-de-camp whom he had sent upon this service had done every thing in his power, under the wild circumstances of the situation under which he was placed; and having chosen General Silviera, because he and all his corps were intimately acquainted with the country, he had a right to consider that every precaution which fell within the Commander's province, had been taken, and proceeded to march the remainder of his corps to Chaves, to support Silviera, should the enemy have forced the passes he was sent to defend. But the whole scheme was overthrown by the unaccountable conduct of that officer.

Lieut.-Col. Napier, (in his observations on the transactions from the time of the Duke of Wellington's taking the command of the Allied forces, till he had driven Soult out of Portugal) says:* "it was, doubtless, right, that to clear the front of the army, and to gather information, Franceschi should advance to the Vouga; but he remained too long in

* Page 301.

the same position, and he should have felt Trant's force more positively. Had the latter officer (whose boldness in maintaining the line of the Vouga was extremely creditable) been beaten, as he easily might have been, the anarchy in the country would have increased; and as Beresford's troops at Thomar wanted but an excuse to disband themselves, the Portuguese and British preparations must have been greatly retarded."

I fully consent to what is said in the first part of the above quotation, as to what Franceschi could have done; and to the praise so justly given to Colonel Trant. But the author, for a military man, has an extraordinary method of separating the subordinate or executive officer from the General under whose directions that officer acts. Wherever he treats of the Portuguese army, he almost always appears to be influenced by an inclination to take away the merit of the Commander, and to confer it entirely upon the Subaltern. We read of the zeal and skill displayed in the execution, but never of the intelligence and foresight evinced in the arrangement of an operation. These things stand in the history as isolated and independent of each other. Lieut.-Col. Napier guerillarises the whole army. But, except as an evidence of the general bent of his feelings, this is of little consequence; and it is a fault which every military man rectifies as he reads. But I am quite at a loss to conceive upon what information, or on what grounds the author asserts, that "Beresford's troops at Thomar wanted but an excuse to disband themselves."

This statement is so utterly unfounded, that, for

the sake of truth and justice, I cannot allow so false an imputation to be cast upon the character of the Portuguese without an attempt to remove it. If Lieut.-Col. Napier would condescend to apply to any one officer in Marshal Beresford's staff, he would learn how very erroneous his representation is. If such an opinion is really entertained, I can confidently assert, that those who hold it, as well as the author, must be entirely ignorant of the feelings which actuated the Portuguese soldiery, and of the cause and motives which led to their disorderly conduct. Their insubordination, even when it existed at its height, was never connected with the slightest idea of disbanding themselves. The cause of their discontent was not of a nature likely to lead to such a result. The Portuguese nation, and more particularly the lower orders, were most sincere in their detestation of the invaders of their country. They were most willing to assist by every possible means in expelling them. But while they were animated by the most enthusiastic feeling against the French, they entertained an ineradicable belief that all foreigners, except the English, were more or less favourable to the nation, which was the object of their righteous abhorrence. Acting upon this persuasion, they attacked and drove away every foreign officer in their service. Most unfortunately, both the army and the people were, at the same time, inspired with a strong suspicion, that the upper classes of their own country, and the officers of their own army, were infected by the same antinational partialities. The events which had taken place among them, after Junot's invasion, were but too well cal-

culated to awaken and encourage such a suspicion. The formation of the Marquis D'Alorno's corps of 12,000 men, which went off to France, and of which all the officers, and the officers only, were volunteers; the demand, however forced, made by the principal persons of the kingdom, that Buonaparte would give a king to Portugal; the government of the kingdom in his name, a measure to which, with few exceptions, the whole of the upper classes apparently acceded; the presence of the French colours exhibited in all places: all these circumstances were broad and speaking facts, which warranted the suspicions of the people, and caused the spirit of insubordination that prevailed among them. At the time, which the author of the History of the Peninsular War is treating of, the general cry, the earnest desire of the nation, was to march immediately against the enemy. With the troops, this was more particularly the case. If their officers opposed themselves to this desire, they were immediately suspected of treachery to their country; and if, on the other hand, they acceded to their demands and encountered a reverse, the same injurious opinion was entertained. The latter case was exemplified in the instance of the unfortunate Bernadine Frêre; and the former, in that of General Miranda, who commanded at Thomar. In the one case, Baron Eben, because he was considered as a British officer, though equally unsuccessful, was still respected by the troops, after Frêre had been assassinated by them: in the other, General Miranda, because he would not comply with the wishes of the troops, but acted, not only in compliance with the orders sent to him, but as prudence

required, was publicly attacked, and the soldiers fired into his windows at Thomar; while Baron Wiederhold (I think was the name), a Brigadier-General, who had been long in the Portuguese service, was obliged to fly, and narrowly escaped with his life. It was this turbulent state of things which induced Lord Beresford to go in person to Thomar. He was convinced, that if in such a crisis he did not interpose to command the popular feeling, the power of directing it might be for ever lost. While the Portuguese troops were in this state of mutiny, Lord Beresford left Lisbon, only attended by his aides-de-camp. He reached Santarem the first day, and the next, 8th April, arrived at Thomar. He had sent forward to notify his intentions. The soldiers, who were drawn out for the purpose, received him, as he rode through the ranks, in perfect tranquillity, with the usual compliments due to his rank. I would here refer the author to his Lordship's order of the next day on the subject of insubordination, after which no symptom of insubordination or disobedience was ever seen in the army. It entirely ceased. It was about the time when the house of General Miranda was insulted, as referred to in the order of the day of the 1st of April, that the battalion, which Lieut.-Col. Napier speaks of as having joined Colonel Trant, marched away from Thomar, contrary to all the remonstrances of their officers, who were obliged to leave them. It was their intention to proceed to Oporto, the fate of which they were unacquainted with. Learning upon the road that that town had fallen into the hands of the enemy, they turned to their left and joined Colonel Trant.

On his reporting their arrival to Lord Beresford, he immediately sent a peremptory order for their return to Thomar, at the same time stating, that, if they wished it, they should have a free passage to join the enemy. Colonel Trant can say what was the effect of this intimation: he can bear witness that there was no sign of disloyalty; no desire to disband. Lieut.-Col. Napier will be sufficiently satisfied of this fact, when he hears that, though they had no officer with them, the whole battalion returned without any desertions, according to the route sent with Lord Beresford's orders. I can assure the author, that in representing the Portuguese troops as influenced by any such disposition as that which he has ascribed to them, he wrote upon most erroneous information. Every event and circumstance of the time prove the contrary to have been the case. As to the troops at Thomar, of which the author more particularly speaks, had such a feeling existed, it must have shewn itself after the capture of Oporto, which was communicated to them in the order of the day of the 2d of April, and after the enemy's successes in the north, of which they were perfectly well informed before Lord Beresford's arrival among them. During their state of mutiny, which drew his Lordship from Lisbon, they were entirely uncontrollable; they had nothing but their inclinations to direct them; and, yet, no suspicion was ever entertained by their officers, that any wish to disband themselves was prevalent among them. I am not aware of any act on their part which could bear such a construction. Indeed, both immediately before, and immediately after this period, when the troops, both regulars and

militia, were twice dispersed by the enemy, once at Chaves and again at Amarante, they immediately reassembled and joined their colours without any defalcation of sufficient importance to be reported. The author will, I am sure, be glad to have the real cause of that general insubordination which existed in the Portuguese nation thus explained to him; as he must necessarily be anxious that every fact should be correctly stated.

The historian says:* "Early in June, Marshal Beresford was, with three brigades, directed on Castello Branco." I can assure the author, that Lord Beresford was neither directed on that place, nor did he go there. What, therefore, Lieut.-Col. Napier subsequently states, could not have occurred. He adds,† "The movement of the second corps, after quitting Monforte, being along the edge of the Portuguese frontier, and constantly threatening the northern provinces, drew Marshal Beresford, as I have stated, from Castello Branco; and all the regular troops capable of taking the field were immediately by him collected round Almeida." Lord Beresford could not go from Castello Branco, for he had never been there; nor was there ever any intention that he should go there; nor are the reasons assigned by Lieut.-Col. Napier, those which really occasioned Lord Beresford's removal to Almeida. The fact is, that the Duke of Wellington never intended that the Portuguese should accompany him on this occasion. These troops still required considerable time for the purpose of organization and discipline; and it was arranged, that a camp should be established near

* Page 320. † Page 328.

Almeida, which, while it afforded an opportunity for the instruction of the troops, might, from its position, have an effect upon the operations of the enemy, and give encouragement to the Spaniards in Castile, and be at hand, if necessary, to assist the northern provinces of Portugal. This last object, indeed, after Soult's expulsion, was that for which it was least likely to be required.

Lieut.-Colonel Napier has enumerated the Portuguese forts.* He has committed a great error in his account of them; but, as this does not concern my present object, I shall say no more on the subject, than that a writer, who takes upon himself to argue so boldly, and to decide with so authoritative a tone, ought, at least, to be well informed on such material points.

"Marshal Beresford," it is said,† "was so credulous of French weakness in the number of troops, as publicly to announce to the Junta of Badajos, that Soult's force, wandering and harassed by continual attacks, was reduced to eight or ten thousand soldiers." Lord Beresford will, I apprehend, be surprised at this information. Although reading of events, with which he had no inconsiderable concern, he must feel himself indebted to Lieut.-Col. Napier for a great deal of very important intelligence, relating both to them and to himself. The above relation will, I suspect, be received by his Lordship as news of the very newest description. I doubt whether Lord Beresford, in the whole course of his life, ever communicated with the Junta at Badajos. At the time alluded to, he had never been in the Alemtejo;

* Page 353. † Page 357.

he had not, necessarily or naturally, any thing to do with that Junta; he was in the north of Portugal, or certainly north of the Tagus, and never had been south of it. Of course, the historian will give his authority for this fact. It would be disingenuous, however, not to confess, that though after the lapse of so many years, it is not possible to ascertain what Lord Beresford really did estimate the force of Marshal Soult to be; yet Lieut.-Col. Napier is quite right in stating, that his Lordship considered its numbers to be inferior to what they actually were. So far he is correct. But where could he have discovered the minute detail of circumstances with which this little error of opinion is swoln out and magnified into so much importance? This public announcement to the Junta at Badajos; this numerical accuracy with which Lord Beresford's estimate of Soult's force is set down; all this particularity reminds one vastly of the veracious anecdotes of the worthies of "The School for Scandal;" and I can only reply to them in the words of Sir Benjamin,—"The Lieut.-Col.'s account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the only true one, for all that."

"The numerous desertions,"* says the historian, "which took place in the Portuguese army, prevented Beresford from taking the field as soon as he expected." The author again is entirely misinformed. As soon as it was arranged that the Portuguese army was to take a position near to Almeida, Lord Beresford put the several corps in motion towards Pinhel Guarda and that vicinity. He himself went to Lisbon, to make the material arrange-

* Page 437.

ments. On reference to the orders of the day of that time, it will be found, that he left Abrantes on the 19th June, not for Castello Branco, but in the opposite direction to Lisbon, where he arived on the 20th. His Lordship remained there till the 14th July, when he left it, and proceeding by the way of Punhete, Curtiçada, Castello Branco, and Guarda, staying one day there, he arrived at Pinhel on the 20th, and on the 23d his head-quarters were at Almeida. If the very short delay in entering Spain, after his arrival at Guarda and Pinhel, had been caused by the desertion of the troops, as the intention of entering Spain was persevered in, the author must perceive, that the evil would have been rather augmented than diminished by delay, as the force of the corps would have been continually decreasing. The real cause was this: the Duque del Parque, the Spanish commander in those parts, was exceedingly urgent that Lord Beresford should enter Spain; but this General would not pass the frontiers till he had made his terms respecting provisions, and for some assistance in cavalry, if they should be required. The arrangement of these points did not last long; for, as Lieut.-Col. Napier justly observes, the Spanish Generals and authorities never hesitated where *promises only* were in question. The promises of the Duque del Parque were fulfilled in the same manner as Cuesta's had been to the Duke of Wellington. Nay, he could not even be induced to deliver to Lord Beresford, when in the greatest want of bread, a small quantity of British biscuit, which had been left in store there by the Commissariat of Sir J. Moore's

army;* nor, after having excused himself on the plea that it might be necessary in case of a siege, would he give its equivalent in bread. This conduct probably originated, as Lieut.-Col. Napier has surmised, in the dissatisfaction which the Duque del Parque experienced, at Lord Beresford's having refused to adopt some wild scheme that he had proposed. The author says,† "both Generals were ignorant of the real strength of the French." In this he is quite correct; and he adds: "but the Spaniards were confident, and insisted on offensive movements; while Beresford, *a General by no means of an enterprising disposition when in the sole command of an army*, contented himself with taking up a defensive line near the Agueda." Here the author, taking leave of Lord Beresford in his second volume, does it with the same unjust and ungenerous manner in which his Lordship's name was originally introduced. That the object of Lieut.-Col. Napier is to impress upon the reader's mind a low opinion of that Commander's military talent, is a fact so axiomatic from the spirit of every paragraph in which the name of Lord Beresford is mentioned, that it cannot require any further evidence to prove it. If, indeed, his volumes contained no other passage, emanating from prejudice and conveying a groundless and pernicious imputation on the fame of that nobleman, this one, little sentence, this parenthetical insinuation of professional backwardness, is more than sufficient to evince the truth of the fact. In the

* Lieut.-Col. Napier with his usual inaccuracy, says, "*by order of Sir A. Wellesley.*" † Page 137.

present instance, however, the author's hostile feelings have overpowered his discretion. His judgment has miserably failed him in seizing upon such an occasion for introducing his detractive observation. He might be asked, indeed, *à propos de quoi?*—but attend to what he says in continuance. "In this, however, he was *justified*, first, by his instructions, which obliged him to look to the pass of Parales and the defence of the frontier line; secondly, by the state of his army, which was not half organized, and without horsemen and artillery; and thirdly, by the conduct of the Spanish authorities." The author's words and expressions are most admirably selected, if it was his purpose to manifest to every eye the unaccountable and unwarrantable prejudice under which he writes; but they are such as no impartial historian would ever on such an occasion, for a moment, have dreamt of making use of. Lieut.-Col. Napier proves, and acknowledges, that Lord Beresford's conduct was proper and his judgment right; and instead of any, even the slightest praise for his discretion, the reader is led to conceive that his conduct was such as has hardly escaped from censure; that he was simply *justified* in his measures; and only justified in this one solitary and particular instance, as an exception from other cases,—which the author has not condescended to name,—in which his Lordship's want of a spirit of enterprise could not be considered as equally justifiable. "In *this*, however, he was justified."—Lord Beresford not a General of an enterprising disposition! This is, indeed, a most curious and inconsistent charge, proceeding, as it does, from Lieut.-Col. Napier; against whose

imputation of rashness and indiscretion in Lord Beresford, nearly the whole of the foregoing observations have been directed. Is it fair, is it tolerable, that the same officer should first have to defend himself from the charge of a rash spirit of enterprise for having so earnestly urged an advance against Marshal Soult; and then should be reproached for a want of enterprise, because he was not rash on an occasion, when Lieut.-Col. Napier himself confesses, that any attempt at enterprise would have merited the censure of rashness? The author, in the preceding page, talks of illogical conclusions; would it not be well that he should sometimes look to those which he himself draws? But will the author explain what he means by a General's being "by no means of an enterprising disposition, when in the sole command of an army," circumstanced, as he knows and states, Marshal Beresford to have been? He criticises, as having an infinite knowledge of military affairs, the conduct of the most celebrated captains; he points out, or he imagines, errors that they have committed; he sets up or knocks down their reputation, *selon son bon plaisir;* and it is not, therefore, too much to ask the explanation of those expressions which he uses in treating of military affairs: I don't believe the most experienced officer will always understand them. "When in the sole command!" what does it mean? Does he mean that Lord Beresford was personally commanding this part of the Allied army? that appears to mean nothing, as every officer who was under him, whether in command of a brigade or a regiment, must necessarily have had the sole command in his

particular sphere, as much as Lord Beresford had of his corps; that is, they were all acting under particular orders and instructions. Does he then mean by "the sole command," that his Lordship had an independent command? This is certainly the construction which every reader would put upon it; but yet how can this be? Lieut.-Col. Napier has himself stated that he had instructions to govern him. This again, most sadly puzzles me as to the author's meaning. If he had instructions, does the author intend to say that he could act contrary to those instructions? If he could not, how was he independent? All this is very perplexing;—the author alone can unravel it.

I have thus gone through the passages of this volume which treat of the military opinions and conduct of the Commander of the Portuguese forces; and the subject of my pamphlet is fairly at an end. This vindication has been undertaken with reluctance; but it appeared indispensable, from the respectability and high character of Lieut.-Col. Napier, and the estimation in which his work is held, that his misrepresentations should not pass unnoticed. I cannot believe that gentleman to be wilfully and knowingly actuated by any other motive than that of giving a fair and candid statement of the facts as they occurred, and of his own opinions respecting them. But he is evidently influenced by strong political prejudices and partialities; he very frequently writes from *ex parte*, or superficial, or false information; and, consequently, his statements and his judgments, are not always to be implicitly relied upon. Lieut.-Col. Napier, who,

I believe, has scarcely ever had more than a company under his orders, or may perhaps have had a field-officer's command in the latter part of the war, cannot, from the very circumstances of his military life, have formed an adequate conception of the difficulties which the General of a large corps has to contend with. No man without experience can, at a distance, estimate the various crosses and the innumerable obstacles which always impede, and very often frustrate, the execution even of those enterprises, which have been most duly considered, most carefully arranged, and most prudently provided for, unless he has been minutely informed by the Commander himself, of every particular impediment which he had to struggle against. It is impossible for any individual, however gifted, to comprehend all the various causes, reasons, and objects, which combine to sway the decision of a General in revolving any given operation; they may be almost infinite; they may depend as well on political, as military, considerations; they may be intended not only with a view to an apparent and declared object, but to produce a remote or a general effect. In contemplating the dangers of the exploit, the difficulty of succeeding, and the advantages to be acquired, distant, improbable and barely possible events and contingencies—even such as but glimmer on the mind of the Commander, and which he could hardly declare to be in his view,—must have their weight and influence. A thousand minute particulars will be admitted into the consideration of his movement, and conduce to his ultimate determination upon it, which must be perfectly unknown to any

one—even to the very officers upon the spot, who are habitually around him, and who are in a certain degree admitted to his confidence: and yet an author sits down quietly in his closet, and assumes, in judging of any military movement, that he possesses a full knowledge of all the springs which have been at work in the General's mind; of all the causes, which have contributed to his success or his reverses; of all the crosses, difficulties and impediments which were in the way he pursued; of the means by which they could have been avoided; and of all the aids which were lying within his reach and might have been advantageously pressed into his service. Without knowing any thing of the circumstances of the times, or of the real object in contemplation, or of the localities among which the operations were carried on; without any knowledge, or at the most a very superficial one, on those points which are necessary to a right understanding of the subject, the historian not only sits down calmly to act as judge and jury on the merits of the case; but also, not unfrequently undertakes to fulfil at the same time the incongruous offices of advocate and sole witness in the cause which he has to consider and decide upon. Even if an author possessed accurate information respecting all the facts, motives, and circumstances, by which the General was swayed, how are we to know that he is endowed with the acuteness of intellect and the military experience which might enable him to form a just conclusion on the subject? One of the veterans of modern literature, in comparing the romance writer with the historian, gives the former the preference; and says,

"Individual history and biography are mere guesses in the dark;" and, in what respect is general history superior to "a guess in the dark," when it would dive into men's thoughts and motives; when it would judge of them without sufficient knowledge or information; or, in short, when it attempts to go further than a bare register of matters of fact?

I grant, that contemporary history might be rendered almost a perfect record of the truth; but it could only be raised to such a pitch of accuracy by a degree of diligence and pains, which no author in this book-making age is ever likely to be found in possession of. To attain it, all such evidence as would be scouted in a court of justice, must be cast aside by the historian: no man's testimony must be received for more or less than it is really worth: a witness may be allowed to speak of that which he actually knows, but not of that which he believes or supposes: the words "*it is said,*" a phrase not entirely unknown to Lieut.-Col. Napier's pages, must never be found to disgrace such a history: public rumour could be of no authority with a writer, who was anxious to ascertain the fact as it existed; and a witness, so proverbially false, would never be allowed a voice, where the investigation and ascertainment of truth was the object: and no judgment would be publicly and irrevocably uttered from the Press, against the views and actions of any man, however eminent or however obscure, till he, the most interested party, had been consulted upon the subject, and allowed to state his reasons either for the reversal, or the mitigation of judgment. With such just and salutary precautions, contemporary history might become a respected and

a sacred depository of past events. It would contain few pages; but those pages would be the records that bore down to posterity the names that merited its approbation or its censure. They would be uncontaminated by the touch of factious, malignant, revengeful or invidious passions; and their good report would be more valued by the hero or the statesman than any of the other honours and distinctions by which his achievements were rewarded. But now, the thing is a mere silly mockery—a shadow without substance—a collection of vulgar and unfounded rumours, and not at all a narration of facts. Like other writers of the day, Lieut.-Col. Napier frequently refers to the reports that are current in society, as the authorities on which his statements rest. I will afford him an example of the futility of such an authority: there is, perhaps, no report connected with the war in the Peninsula, more generally circulated than that Lord Beresford, during the battle of Albuera, ordered a retreat; yet nothing can be more destitute of any, the least foundation. From the very nature of the action, in reference to the position of the troops after it had begun, there could have been no retreat, except a decided flight, of the line that was engaged. Lord Beresford heard this report at the time. On hearing it repeated, he wrote to the then Adjutant-General on the subject, and referred him to the late Sir William Stewart, to Sir Lowry Cole, and to Sir W. Lumley,—the latter of whom commanded the whole Allied cavalry, and the two former the two divisions of infantry engaged,—to learn if either of them had ever received such an order. Two of these officers are still able to answer

that question. It is not my intention to recount here all the circumstances of that battle; but I will merely observe, that there never was an instant of the day in which the enemy had any advantage; though to the last, to the moment of their abandoning the field before the bayonet-attack of the British, Marshal Soult might have said the same. Until that moment, the battle was doubtful; but the shout of the English was no sooner heard, and the attack of the bayonet commenced, than the battle was decided without another struggle. I merely refer to this fact, on the present occasion, for the sake of displaying to Lieut.-Col. Napier, by a strong example, the extreme injustice, which characters, deserving the highest praise, may incur with posterity, if their actions are to be stated according to the representations of popular report, and judged of in the pages of history, according to such erroneous and prejudiced representations.

I have now done with the History of the Peninsular War, as far as Lord Beresford is concerned, and most sincerely hope that this remonstrance will induce its author to re-consider the passages I have animadverted upon, and to purify his volumes of the unjust imputations which they are calculated to leave on the fair fame of that highly-talented and distinguished Commander.

But, before I take my final leave, there is yet another point on which I would speak. The author, very unintentionally (as I believe, indeed, is the case with all the errors of his History), and from want of information, has done some injustice to a meritorious officer, and those who were under his command.

"It has," he says, "been observed in a former part of this work, that the inhabitants of Corunna honourably maintained their town, until the safety of the fleet, which carried Sir J. Moore's army from the Spanish shores, was secure; but they were less faithful to their own cause." With regard to the first part of the quotation; the whole fleet, with the exception of two line of battle ships, and those at the mouth of the harbour, had got clear off to sea on the evening of the 17th; and Lord Beresford had, as the author relates, possession of Corunna till the 18th. It cannot therefore, strictly speaking, be said, "that the *inhabitants of Corunna* maintained the town;" yet all who were with his Lordship, will join in the author's encomiums on their admirable conduct. They evinced the sincerest good will towards the British, and desired to render them every possible assistance. During the whole of the 17th, the women, and many of them a respectable class, were carrying, from the magazines and stores to the ramparts, the shot and ammunition for the guns; nor could any blame attach to the citizens for surrendering their town, except that of improvidence, in not having supplied themselves with provisions, and being prepared for sustaining a siege. Lieut.-Col. Napier will cease to speak of them as "unfaithful to their own cause," when he hears that, on the 18th, when Corunna was surrendered, it did not contain food enough for a single day. The Governor, whose conduct was to the last deserving the highest praise, informed Lord Beresford on the 17th, on learning that the embarkation and evacuation of the town by the British, would be completed on the morrow—that it

was entirely destitute of supplies. After having made this communication, he returned and begged that Lord Beresford would intercede with the British Commander to give him (as he expressed himself) a ship load of provisions, and declared, that with such assistance he would defend the place to the last extremity. Lord Beresford made the request, but the Admiral was unable to comply with it. No supply was granted: the Governor was at an after period very unjustly ill treated by the then Spanish Government, and common justice to him, and to the people and garrison of Corunna, requires that the above statement should be made.

APPENDIX.

(No. I.)

MARSHAL BERESFORD TO SIR J. CRADOCK.

March 29, 1809.

SIR,

I have the honour to annex your Excellency a copy of requisitions, from their Excellencies the government of this kingdom, for the speedy succouring of Oporto, which your Excellency is informed is so immediately in danger, from the approach of the French army, whose advance posts are now within four leagues of that town.

I annex, for the information of your Excellency, the instructions which, under the existing circumstances, I had issued to the General commanding beyond the Douro; but the object of which has been frustrated by events, at once unfortunate and melancholy.

The corps of Brigadier-General Victoria, consisting of two battalions of the line, which, on the appearance of the urgent danger in the north, I had directed to cross the Douro, are now in Oporto, as is the second battalion of the Lusitanian legion, part of the regiment of Valença, and some regiments of militia; but I cannot get any return of the troops there, though, I understand, the number is considerable; and to this must be added a considerable number of ordenanza from without, and the armed population, which will, I understand, amount to eight or ten thousand men, and of the arms come from England, three thousand stand that were sent to the army north of the Douro, are probably now in Oporto, with a proportion of ammunition. I have thought it right to give this statement of the actual state of things at Oporto, as far as I can get information of, that your Excellency may be aware of it; and it is with regret that I farther add, that there prevails, in the town, the greatest anarchy and insubordination, —and that, in short, by the latest accounts, the populace entirely govern the law, civil and military.

Upon the subject of marching a British force to Oporto under the actual circumstances, and under the consideration of the various points from which the enemy at present threaten us, we had yesterday a full discussion, and which renders it unnecessary for me now to recapitulate the several reasons which induced me to submit to your Excellency's consideration the propriety of advancing the British force to Leiria, to be thence pushed on to Oporto, or otherwise. as the information from different parts may render

expedient. But my principal reason was, that as there appeared an intention of co-operation (of which, however, there is no certainty) between the Marshals Victor and Soult, it would be most desirable, by either driving back or overcoming one, before the other could give his co-operating aid, to defeat their plan:* and if we should, or not, be able to do this, would be merely a matter of calculation of time, as, supposing, on our arrival at Leiria, Oporto offered a prospect of holding out till we could reach it, and that Victor continued his southern pursuit of Cuesta, he would get so distant from us, as to permit the army, pushing from Leiria to Oporto, without apprehension from the army of Victor, who, by the time he could possibly hear of our movement, would be in the Sierra Morena, which would clearly show that his principal object, and from which he did not seem willing to be diverted, was either the destruction of Cuesta's army, to enter more securely into Portugal, or to push to Seville; but, at all events, he would be too distant to give us apprehensions of any surprise upon this capital, as we have daily information of his movements, and which would enable us, wherever we were in Portugal, even to reach it before him. If, however, the final co-operation of these two armies is intended for the conquest of this kingdom, and that Soult does not think that of his army from Gallicia, and that from Salamanca sufficient, then he will satisfy himself, until Victor is ready to act with him, in the possession of the country beyond the Douro, where he will refresh and rest his troops, re-equip them, and otherwise provide them, to be ready for the projected co-operation,—whilst the army from Salamanca will, probably, satisfy itself with the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and act and wait in conjunction with Soult, both waiting till Victor has settled his present objects, and then all co-operating.

It is for your Excellency to judge, under the actual circumstances, of the propriety of this movement towards Oporto, not only for the British troops, but, also, for those of the Allies, as, by my instructions, I must consider you as commanding the Allied armies; and the time is now certainly arrived, for what efforts they can make being combined: undoubtedly, their being employed in separate projects, will cause each falling separately, and without advantage to the common cause.

I would, however, certainly, under present circumstances, be unwilling to send the few troops I could spare from the army, between the Tagus and the Mondego, to Oporto, as, unsupported by British, I fear it would be losing so many men, that on a future occasion, with such support, may weigh in the scale; and, indeed, the very insubordinate state of the troops, of which I have just received a second report and complaint from General Miranda, would render it highly unwise to send them to a town in the state that Oporto now is, where the best disposed troops, except a great body went there, if they were not debauched to insubordination, would be borne

* Colonel Napier makes nonsense of this part of Lord Beresford's letter, in his volumes, by mispointing it. He puts a comma at 'plan,' and a full stop, after 'able.'

down by the multitude; and it is to be feared, that whatever Portuguese troops enter the town will fall with it, as the temper of the people prevents the possibility of even any preparations for retreat, in case of misfortune, to the outward and very extended lines of defence. Having stated so much, I must leave the question to your Excellency, &c.

I have the honour, &c.

W. C. BERESFORD.

(No. II.)

SIR J. CRADOCK TO MARSHAL BERESFORD.

Lisbon, March 29th, 1809.

DEAR SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge, at the earliest moment, your Excellency's letter of this evening, conveying a copy of the request from the regency, &c. that I should move the British troops to the succour of Oporto, at this moment menaced, &c.

Upon a subject of such importance, I experience considerable relief, that the general view of approaching circumstances has been, for a length of time, within my reflection, and that all my reasoning (whatever it may be) has been transmitted to the government in England, and the part I am now called upon to act, is simply but the execution of those measures I have long thought it prudent to pursue, and which the present critical and involved state of affairs seem to confirm, and give no reason to alter in any part.

It has always appeared, to my judgment, that the enemy has but two objects to attain in this kingdom. The possession of Lisbon and Oporto, I believe it to be universally admitted, and I need not point out to your discrimination the infinitely superior value of the former above the latter. There are such positive local disadvantages attached to Oporto, independent of its remote position, that no military disposition, in which a small English army is to bear part, can apply. It pains me, therefore, to decline obedience to an application from so high an authority as the governors of the kingdom. It may be their duty to make the request, though I much doubt if their judgment goes along with it; but it appears to be mine, not to transfer the small British force, under my command, (totally inadequate to separate objects), from the defence of this part of the kingdom, to the very doubtful succour of a place two hundred miles distant, and by a movement to the north, with this professed view, feel myself engaged in a war that leaves Lisbon and the Tagus defenceless, and unprotected from the inroads of other bodies of the enemy that may be prepared to combine in a general invasion.

I shall hasten, therefore, from all general observation, to the exact case before us, and state, in a concise manner, our actual situation, leaving to your judgment, how far it may be necessary to communicate some particulars that relate to the British army, and lay before the Governors and your Excellency the best ideas I can form for the employment of the British auxiliary force, in conjunction with the Portuguese, for the ultimate protection of Portugal under the pressure of all existing circumstances.

It may be granted that the enemy, with a force, from seventeen to twenty thousand, a considerable portion of which (it is said five thousand) is cavalry, is directly menacing Oporto, there is reason to believe that the division at Salamanca, estimated from nine to twelve thousand, with a powerful force of artillery, is moving to Ciudad Rodrigo, either for the investment of that place, or to act in conjunction with General Soult, by an advance into the Upper Beira. In the present view, it is necessary to state, with the weight it so well deserves, that the united forces of Generals Victor and Sebastiani are, apparently, pursuing General Cuesta, just retiring before them; but it appears that a part of the enemies had diverged to Merida, and had spread alarm and dismay, even to the town of Badajos, on the frontiers of Portugal, from whence, to the heights of Almeida, & the opposite of Lisbon, through the whole of the Alemtejo: except the weak garrison of Elva, there is nothing to interrupt the immediate passage.

Against such an attempt from the enemy I derive no security from the contiguity of General Cuesta's army; for, besides the general disinclination he has so strongly marked to the British character, he has other objects to pursue, and his principal wish is to gain time for the organization of his own force. To a person so well acquainted with Portugal, and circumstances of the present hour, as your Excellency is, it is quite superfluous to enter upon further details, &c. It is only required to lay before you, in confidence, the exact amount of the British forces, as the real point upon which the whole subject depends: I may state it at twelve thousand effective men, to take the field, if the necessary garrison to maintain Lisbon in some tranquillity, and retain possession of the maritime forts is left. It may be increased to fourteen thousand, if these points are risked; but even to gain the advantage of numbers to so limited a force, I cannot recommend the measure; for the anarchy that prevails at Oporto, and would be, perhaps, worse at Lisbon, is more to be dreaded than the presence of an enemy, and may render all exertion useless. The necessary means of transport for our army, notwithstanding every effort from the earliest moment, are quite inadequate, and not more than two and a half brigades of artillery (fifteen guns) can be equipped. To adventure upon an advance to Oporto, two hundred miles from Lisbon, when the very object is, perhaps, at this moment lost, seems to be a point only to gratify the good feelings of every soldier, but quite opposed to the sober dictates of the understanding, and the ultimate view of things. If the British army sets out with the declared object to succour Oporto, or expel the enemy, the impression on the public mind is the same;

nothing but the accomplishment will suit the English character; and I confess that the best reasoning of my judgment, upon every public and private principle, for the credit of the British army, and the hope of any effectual assistance from the Portuguese nation is, that the British troops should never make one retrograde step: from that moment I will date the extinction of all Portuguese aid, military as well as civil. The British army, from its description, may disregard this common occurrence in war; but I am persuaded, in the present state of the Portuguese army, and with the sentiments of suspicion now alive, all explanation would be vain, and that it would be left to the small body of English, alone, to sustain the whole future conflict.

I have now only to state what my inferior judgment points out; and as the arduous situation of command is allotted to me, I must try to execute to the best of my power. I shall remain faithful to my first principles, and persevere in the defence of Lisbon and the Tagus. I invite the co-operation of the Portuguese force, and, under your guidance and auspicious control, I look to a very powerful accession of strength. I am convinced nothing will be done by them in detached parties, or in any isolated situation. They will acquire confidence by number, and emulation will arise, a rapid discipline will ensue from their connexion with us, and the whole, animated by your presence, will give the best promise of success. Until we have consulted again, I shall not say whether our general position should be at Lumiar, extending the whole right to Saccavem, or any other station more in advance. At this moment I have only to express the indispensable circumstance of some fixed basis, upon which the Allied army will act, and, by our united strength, try to counteract the peculiar disadvantages that attend the defence of Portugal from positions that cannot properly be embraced, and always leave some part exposed.

Allow me to conclude, with the solemn expression of my own conviction, that nothing will give so much chance of a prosperous result to the arduous scene in which we are engaged (either as to reality or view) as the knowledge to the enemy, that, before he conquers Portugal, he must defeat an army of some magnitude, determined to fight him, and awaiting his approach, unbroken and not exposed to the danger of a false movement. Such a conquest cannot be an easy one, and must prove, if he pursue it, a powerful diversion in favour of Spain.

It will give me the sincerest pleasure, &c.

JOHN CRADOCK.

(No. III.)

SIR A. WELLESLEY TO SIR J. CRADOCK.

Lisbon, April 23rd.

Mr. Villiers will have informed you of my arrival here yesterday, and of the concurrence of my opinion with that which you appear to entertain in respect to the further movements to the northward. I conclude that you will have determined to halt the army at Leiria. I think that, before any further steps are taken in respect to Soult, it would be desirable to consider the situation of Victor; how far he is enabled to make an attack upon Portugal, and the means of defence of the east of Portugal, while the British will be to the northward; and, eventually, the means of defence of Lisbon and the Tagus, in case this attack should be made upon the country.

All these subjects must have been considered by you, and, I fear in no very satisfactory light, as you appear to have moved to the northward unwillingly: and I should be glad to talk them over with you.

In order to consider of some of them, and to make various arrangements, which can be made only here, I have requested Marshal Beresford to come here, if he should not deem his absence from the Portuguese troops, in the present state, likely to be disadvantageous to the public service; and I have directed him to let you know whether he will come or not.

It might, probably, also be more agreeable and convenient to you to see me here than with the army; and if this should be case, it would be a most convenient arrangement to me to meet you here. I beg, however, that you will consider this proposition only in a view to your own convenience and wishes. If you should, however, choose to come, I shall be very much obliged to you if you will bring with you the adjutant-general and quarter-master-general, the chief engineer, and the commanding officer of artillery, and the commissary.

Ever yours, &c.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

N.B. Some paragraphs of a private nature are omitted.

(No. IV.)

Extracts of a Letter from Sir Arthur Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh. Lisbon, April 24th, 1809.

"I arrived here on Saturday, and found that Sir John Cradock and General Beresford had moved up the country, to the northward, with the troops under their command respectively; the former to Leiria, and the latter to Thomar. Sir John Cradock, however, does not appear to have

entertained any decided intention of moving forward; on the contrary, indeed, he appears, by his letters to Mr. Villiers, to have intended to go no further till he should hear that Victor's movements were decided, and therefore, I consider affairs in this country to be exactly in the state in which, if I found them, it was the intention of the king's minister that I should assume the command; and, accordingly, I propose to assume it as soon as I shall communicate with Sir John Cradock. I have written to him, and to General Beresford, to apprise him that I conceive advantage will result from our meeting here, and I expect them both here as soon as possible. In respect to the enemy, Soult is still at Oporto, and he has not pushed his posts to the southward further than the river Vouga. He has nothing in Tras os Montes since the loss of Chaves, of which you have been most probably apprised; but he has some posts on the river Tamega, which divides that province from Minho, and it is supposed that he wishes to reserve for himself the option of retreating through Tras os Montes into Spain, if he should find it necessary. General Silviera with a Portuguese corps, is in Tras os Montes, but I am not acquainted with its strength or its composition. General Lapisse, who commands the French corps which, it was supposed, when I left England, was marching from Salamanca into Portugal, has turned off to his left, and has marched along the Portuguese frontier to Alcantara, where he crossed the Tagus, and thence he went to Merida, on the Guadiana, where he is in communication with, indeed I may say, part of the army of Victor, he has an advanced post at Montejo, nearer to the Portuguese frontier than Merida. Victor has continued at Medellin since the action with Cuesta; he is either fortifying that post, or making an entrenched camp there. Cuesta is at Llerena, collecting a force again, which, it is said, will soon be twenty-five thousand infantry, and six thousand cavalry, a part of them good troops; I know nothing of the Marquis de la Romana, or of anything to the northward of Portugal. I intend to move upon Soult, as soon as I can make some arrangements upon which I can depend for the defence of the Tagus, either to impede or to delay Victor's progress, in case he should come in while I am absent. I should prefer an attack upon Victor, in concert with Cuesta, if Soult was not in possession of a fertile province of this kingdom and of the favourite town of Oporto, of which it is most desirable to deprive him; and if any operation upon Victor, connected with Cuesta's movements, did not require time to concert it, which may as well be employed in dislodging Soult from the north of Portugal. If Soult should go, I think it most advisable, for many reasons, in which I need not enter at present, to act upon the defensive in the north of Portugal, and to bring the British army to the eastern frontier. If the light brigade should not have left England, when you receive this letter, I trust that you will send them off without loss of time; and I request you to desire the officer commanding them, to endeavour to get intelligence, as he will go along the coast, particularly at Aveiro and the mouth of the Mondego; and I wish that he should stop at the latter

place for orders, if he should find that the British army is engaged in operations to the northward, and if he should not already have received orders at Aveiro. The twenty-third dragoons might also receive directions to a similar purport. The hussars, I conclude, have sailed before this time. We are much in want of craft here; now that we are going to carry on an operation to the northward constant convoys will be necessary, and the Admiral does not appear to have the means in his power of supplying all that is required of him. The twenty-fourth regiment arrived this day, &c.

(Signed) ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

STRICTURES

ON PARTS OF

COL. NAPIER'S THIRD VOLUME.

PREFACE.

THIS pamphlet has been unavoidably delayed. I had determined, on first reading Col. Napier's third volume, to resume my Strictures, and expose the many misrepresentations that it contained, with regard to those parts of the Peninsular war in which I was myself engaged: but, as the events took place some twenty years ago, I was apprehensive lest my memory might, in some respects, deceive me, and was, therefore, extremely anxious to procure some contemporary documents that might assure me of the correctness of recollections, and confirm my statements to the public. I knew that Major-Gen. Sir Benjamin D'Urban, a person of all others the most competent to the task, had, very soon after the transactions in question, written and printed a very full and minute account of them. A copy of this narrative was most diligently sought for. Application was made to every person who was conceived likely to be in possession of it; and, after those inquiries had proved in vain, the public departments of the Adjutant-General and Quarter-Master-General were searched. It was confidently expected that the pamphlet would be found among the papers of the latter,

as it had been written when its author was Deputy Quarter-Master-General at the Horse Guards, and there was reason for believing that some copies had been there deposited by him. These researches, which occupied several months, were entirely without success, and I was at length compelled to apply to Sir Benjamin D'Urban himself; but, knowing that a considerable period must elapse before his answer from Demerara could reach me, I proceeded to make my own remarks, without any other authorities than those afforded me by Col. Napier himself, on the very prejudiced and erroneous statements of his History. The ensuing Strictures were entirely completed, as they are now printed, before Sir Benjamin D'Urban's answer and pamphlet arrived. Had not this been the case, I should have added very little to his lucid and simple statement of facts. There are a few differences in our details; but none which can be considered of any moment, or which may not very easily be explained. It is evident that two officers, with equal advantages of observation, may, on some unimportant occasions, see the same occurrences under a very different light and aspect. As I write from memory, and Sir Benjamin D'Urban wrote almost immediately after the transactions took place, with the further advantage of documents to guide him, the reader will necessarily give his view the preference to mine, unless some confirmatory circumstances, or valid argument, should chance to turn the balance in my favour. The slight discrepancies which exist between our respective accounts will be found noticed, and commented on, in the one or two notes which I have attached to Sir B. D'Urban's

"Report." But it will be evident, that unless both of us are discredited in points of fact that passed under our own eyes—unless both of us are completely in the wrong—it is impossible that Col. Napier should be in the right. The opinion which Sir B. D'Urban entertains of the historian's accuracy and impartiality, may be seen from the opening passage of his preface, where he says, "Having lately read that part of the third volume of Col. Napier's 'History of the War in the Peninsula,' which treats especially of the operations in the Alemtejo, and Spanish Estremadura in 1811, under Lord Beresford, I have been very forcibly impressed with a sense of the injustice which it does to the character of the Marshal, whose services to his country and to the general cause during the war, was unquestionably of no common order; and with its obvious tendency—and that, too, after a lapse of twenty years—to detract from his high and well-earned reputation. With a view to counteract this injustice, I have been induced to publish a short report of those operations, which I had prepared some years ago for another purpose, and which was only intended for the information of a very few friends, to whom it was sent."

Such is the opinion held of Col. Napier's candour, by one whose talents, zeal, and honour, every officer of the army, in which he is almost universally known, will vouch for and maintain. But opposed as the accounts of Sir Benjamin D'Urban and Col. Napier are, it is extraordinary that the latter is evidently a mere plagiarist of the former; and, though no mention of the debt is any where to be met with in the pages of "the History," it is plain that many passages must

have been written with "the Report" lying in the view of its author. That the reader may at once see how certainly this unacknowledged authority has been used, and appreciate the manner in which, while its very words are adopted, the sense of them is perverted, I shall place before him a few parallel passages from either author. Sir Benjamin D'Urban says,—"Marshal Soult, having reconnoitred the position of the Allies on the 15th, determined to attack their right, which ground afforded scope for using his superior cavalry to advantage, and which he expected to find but weakly occupied, because the Spanish infantry not having arrived when he made his reconnoisance, there had been an appearance of very few troops.

"Here, therefore, he thought to roll up the army by its right flank, establishing himself upon the height Z Z, and thence penetrating to the Valverde road, to take the position in reverse, place himself upon its communications, and pursue his success to the utmost that such an advantage would have put in his power."

Let us now look at the passage which Col. Napier has constructed on the foundation which Sir Benjamin D'Urban has here afforded him:—He says, (page (532),—"Soult examined Beresford's position without hindrance on the evening of the 15th, and having heard that the 4th division was left before Badajoz, and that Blake would not arrive before the 17th, he resolved to attack the next morning; for he had detected all the weakness of the English General's dispositions for battle.

"The hill in the centre, commanding the Valverde

road, was undoubtedly the key of the position, if an attack was made parallel to the front; but the heights to the right presented a sort of table-land, trending backwards towards the Valverde road, and looking into the rear of the line of battle. Hence, it was evident that if a mass of troops could be placed there, they must be beaten, or the right wing of the Allied army would be rolled up on the centre, and pushed into the narrow ravine of the Arroya. The Valverde road could then be seized, the retreat cut, and the powerful cavalry of the French would complete the victory. Now the right of the Allies and the left of the French approximated to each other, being only divided by a wooded hill about cannon-shot distance from either, but separated from the Allies by the Albuera, and from the French by a rivulet called the Feria. This height, neglected by Beresford, was ably made use of by Soult. During the night he placed behind it the artillery under General Ruty; the 5th corps under Girard; and the heavy Dragoons under Latour Maubourg; thus concentrating 15,000 men and forty guns within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing; and yet that General could neither see a man, nor draw a sound conclusion as to the real plan of attack."

It will be seen that the above paragraphs from Col. Napier's work, with the transposition of a few sentences, and with the exception of a few slight changes and omissions by which an entirely different colour is given to the meaning of his authority, is a direct plagiarism from Sir Benjamin D'Urban. The reasons which the latter has assigned for Soult's choice of his point of attack are founded in fact, and are such as

every military man will immediately find to be correct and just. But the historian could not bear the necessary inference;—he could not endure that Marshal Soult should be deceived, and make his selection upon a false estimate:—And he has departed from the strict letter of the documents that were before him, to make his representations favourable to the military reputation of his friend.

In Sir Benjamin D'Urban's work, as originally printed, there was found this passage:—"Under this conviction (that of the enemy preparing to attack the right of the Allies), the Marshal directed General Blake to form all his *second* line and the right of his *first* to his right, and so to occupy Z Z, and he put the second division from the centre in movement to the right to support him, &c." It is obvious that there is a typographical error in this sentence. The words *first* and *second* have changed places by some mistake in passing through the press; for the first line having its right on the pivot to the second at the time, the right company or division had only to make the usual wheel of a quarter-circle to its right, and the rest form on it; whereas much confusion must necessarily have occurred in making the second or rear line perform this evolution with the first in its front. It would have been adopting a very complex movement, whilst a very simple one was at hand. The case is of no matter of importance, and is only recurred to in proof of the close regard with which Col. Napier sometimes follows the authority of Sir Benjamin D'Urban's Report; for, in this instance, he has even copied into his History the errors of the printer.

STRICTURES

ON PARTS OF

COL. NAPIER'S THIRD VOLUME.

I had hoped that the publication of my former observations would have been sufficient to admonish Lieut.-Colonel Napier of his injustice, and save me from the pain and trouble of a second remonstrance. I had hoped that the multiplied proofs of prejudice and inaccuracy which had been laid before him, in my first Strictures on those parts of his work that relate to Marshal Beresford, would have had the effect of producing some increase of diligence in collecting and selecting his materials; some little consideration of the opinions he may feel disposed to publish; and some modification of his severity towards those officers who have the misfortune not to be honoured with his favour. Those hopes have been deceived. My pamphlet was published almost two months before the appearance of the third volume of Colonel Napier's history. It was written with as little personality and severity of remark as was

consistent with the truth of the facts. It contained such matter as might have led any man of inferior self-confidence to the historian of the Peninsular War, to question the impartiality of some of his channels of information, and to distrust the soundness of his own opinions. But it has produced no such effects; and, if the latter chapters of his third volume have been revised since the appearance of my publication, they have certainly not been reconsidered with a candid and an amicable disposition.

As Colonel Napier is personally unacquainted with Lord Beresford, I had presumed that the author's judgment respecting the merits and talents of that distinguished officer might have been involuntarily warped by the nature of his political opinions. Whether I am mistaken or not with regard to the origin of the prejudice, every dispassionate reader of my last pamphlet is convinced that, from some cause or other, such a prejudice really does exist. That conviction, I apprehend, cannot be otherwise than confirmed by a perusal of the ensuing pages; but, putting aside all consideration of the justice or injustice of Colonel Napier's representations, I shall, at once, proceed to point out the errors of his last published volume, and expose his total incapacity for the military part of the undertaking he has engaged in. I lament exceedingly that the historian should be so insufficient to the task. As an Englishman and an officer conversant with the events he treats of, I am anxious that transactions, so important and so conducive to the glory and the military fame of my country, should be truly, fully, and faithfully represented. I do not know of any individual more

competent to the work, if the accomplishments of style were all that were required, than the present author. But style is not the only essential of an historian; and Colonel Napier is most unhappily defective in all the greater qualifications. He wants sound and authentic information—he wants that experience of military affairs, which might enable him to form an opinion of great and extensive operations —he wants an accurate knowledge of the localities in which some of the most important events occurred; and, above all, he wants that calm spirit of impartiality which affords the only guarantee for historical fidelity. With these glaring and radical defects, the author's style—clear, flowing, various and perspicuous as it is—is more an evil than an advantage. It only tends to propagate error, to circulate misrepresentation, and to continue to the nineteenth century the difficulty of discerning where "fable ends, and history begins;" or rather, indeed, to preserve the belief that "all history is fable."

In our author's narrative of the Peninsular war, every reader, whether military or civil, must be struck with the very sparing manner in which he produces his authorities. He cannot, of course, always write from personal knowledge—he cannot have been present in every transaction he discusses; indeed, from his gross and innumerable errors, it might be conceived that he had not been personally engaged in any one of them; and it would be some satisfaction to learn from whom his intelligence was derived. With regard to the operations under Marshal Beresford, which I was fully acquainted with myself, and which Colonel Napier has assumed

the liberty of criticising so severely, I have taken the trouble of inquiring from many of the Generals, the principal officers of the staff, and others capable of enlightening his ignorance, whether he had or had not communicated with them upon the subject. In those inquiries I have only been able to find one who had been consulted; and from that one, as will afterwards appear, he only asked for half the necessary information, and supplied the remainder by a random and most erroneous guess of his own. I do not pretend to say that the author has altogether been negligent in making himself acquainted with the circumstances he treats of, or that he has no grounds whatever for his details. He has, I presume, had access to all the official documents: they are easily procured. These are things within every man's reach. He has also gleaned together here and there, many loose, scattered, and isolated facts. But I do affirm, that with regard to those parts of the Peninsular war which fell under my own observation, and of which I profess to have a full and certain knowledge, there is not a single instance in which I find him altogether correct, or giving a just, and fair, and accurate relation of the events. If, for instance, he is describing a battle, he has collected, from a multitude of different officers, a multitude of circumstances respecting it. Each of his informants recounts to him the occurrences that fell under his immediate observation. Of these disjointed fragments the historian manufactures his report. He weaves the web of his narrative, of these several and separate threads, without any regard to the lights, shades, and colours

of the original; and the product of his labour, when it comes out finished from his loom, however bright and glowing it may chance to appear to the eye of the general spectator, does not retain the slightest resemblance to the object of which it pretends to convey a representation. It does not depict the battle that was really fought, but an imaginary battle of Colonel Napier's. It becomes like a chapter from a romance founded on facts, and of which the facts are so miserably misplaced and so strangely coloured, that they become as false as the fiction. In addition to this defect in the mode of collecting and arranging his materials, the sources of intelligence to which the author has applied are not always of the most unquestionable description. It is evident that he has often received his information from persons who, however well acquainted with one side of the transactions treated of, are not likely to give a very impartial account of them; who might be anxious to cast such a gloss over their own errors and mischances as would secure a favourable judgment from posterity; and who might not, on the other hand, be found very liberal or even just in their animadversions on the conduct of their opponents. The informants to whom I allude are those French officers, on whose authority Colonel Napier is believed to have relied most implicitly in collecting and colouring the materials of his work. Now, even allowing that those gentlemen meant to act fairly towards both parties, and that they did act fairly towards their own, it is morally impossible, from the very circumstances of the case, that they should act with equal fairness towards the English

Those who are engaged on different sides in a campaign, see the whole course of affairs from such opposite points of view, as must necessarily render each incapable of forming a correct judgment of the arrangements and conduct of his adversary. As an illustration of this fact, let us take M. Segur's History of Buonaparte's War in Russia. Segur was present with the French army; and, giving him credit for perfect impartiality, we may fully trust in whatever he states respecting it, because he was in the confidence of the commander, and could not have been otherwise than well acquainted with all the more important occurrences that took place. But, on the other hand, with regard to what he relates of the opposing army, we cannot, by any means, yield him the same degree of confidence. We know that much of what he recounts must have rested merely upon conjecture; that he may often praise the Russian commanders for accidental successes; and that he may often blame them for not adopting measures which his knowledge of the state or position of the French army could have shewn him to be expedient, but of which state or position the adverse Generals were necessarily ignorant, and which if known, they might not perhaps, from the existing circumstances or arrangements of the time, have been able to turn to any advantage. In such a case, therefore, either the praise or blame of M. Segur, though a military man, and actually present during the transactions that he describes, is deserving of very little attention; because, from the very nature of his position, he was incapable of forming a correct judgment upon the subject. Now, as it is

with Segur and the Russian Generals, so is it with all those French officers, by whose accounts Col. Napier is so much influenced, and those English commanders to whose conduct and merits their observations relate. They may have been very admirable judges of what measures were right and expedient for the French army; but they were precluded, by their very situation, from forming an accurate opinion, or even any opinion at all, upon what measures might, or might not, be right and expedient for the Allies.

In my former Strictures, confining myself entirely to those parts of our author's work which related to Lord Beresford, I passed over very many grave inaccuracies, which I trust some other hand will undertake the exposure of. It was not my object to give a general review of the History; though I believe my observations have not a little tended to shake its credit in the world. In my present remarks, it is my intention to follow the same course, and notice very little, if any of the work, in which the conduct and fame of Marshal Beresford are not either directly or indirectly implicated. My observations will commence with the siege of Almeida. The author's account of this event is short, and, in its result, is, for the general reader, sufficiently correct. It might be considerably cavilled at in its details; but, as this is never my object, I shall merely give an outline of its circumstances, that the reader, being made acquainted with the then existing state of affairs, may more easily comprehend the transactions connected with the conduct of the Lieutenant Governor, in reporting which, Col. Napier has committed almost as many blunders as he has written words.

The fortress of Almeida was unfortunately placed on the wrong side of the Coa for the defence of Portugal. It ought to have been on the left bank. Such a position would have rendered it extremely difficult for an enemy, coming from Spain, to besiege it, on account of the deep interposing ravine, which the author has elsewhere so accurately described. Situated, however, as it was, on the right bank, the difficulty of access was from Portugal. Had its position been otherwise, the besieging and covering army would have found themselves compelled to cross this difficult impediment, and take their post on the Portuguese side of it; where, placed as the Allied forces were, a very considerable danger would have been incurred: and, as the enemy must have passed over a very large body of men, he would have found it difficult to provision them; or, at the best, would have consumed, during the short period of the siege, all the stores which had been prepared for his supplies in effecting the invasion of Portugal. Thus their operations must have been delayed, or some other less favourable point of entrance must have been chosen. While, if the relief of the place was undertaken, and successfully undertaken, the enemy could not lose less than all the battering train and stores which he had brought across the ravine. As it was, Almeida was most unfortunately situated. The place was also, as Col. Napier has stated, defective as a fortification; the escarp, being in one part uncovered by the counterscarp, could be seen to the bottom: it could, consequently, be breached from a distance, and, when left to itself and vigorously attacked, was incapable of making a protracted

resistance. It was, however, at the time of the siege in question, provisioned for three months; and, with a very sufficient garrison, and placed as the Allied army was, the fall of Almeida might have been very considerably retarded. This was an object of no slight importance at the moment; as, at that season of the year, when the first rains were not very distant, a little retardment of their movements might have obliged the French to forego the invasion of Portugal till the following campaign. The chance of this was, however, suddenly lost by the explosion of the grand magazine. Whether this misfortune was the result of treason or accident, has never to this hour been ascertained. There were, indeed, strong reasons for suspecting that it did not occur without the connivance and management of Col. Bareiros, the senior officer of artillery: for not only did he act as Col. Napier has described, on being sent by Cox to Marshal Massena; but it was discovered, from papers found in his apartments, that he had for some time been in correspondence with Brigadier-Gen. Pampluna, a Portuguese of the very worst character, —a traitor to his country, and at that moment in the camp of the French army. But it is a fact worthy of remark, and one which, in justice, ought to be recorded to the honour of the Portuguese nation, that this Bareiros was the only traitor to the cause of his country, from the expulsion of the French in 1808, to the very conclusion of the Peninsular war. The conduct of the Lieut.-Governor is truly related by our historian; but he was no traitor, according to the common acceptation of the term. He acted under the influence of fear, and fear alone. From

the beginning of the siege, he had sheltered himself in the casemates, and exhibited the most unequivocal signs of pusillanimity. The apprehension of a renewed bombardment, which had ceased after the explosion of the magazine, gave the death-blow to the little spirit of manliness which this unfortunate individual was possessed of, and induced him to act as Col. Napier has described. Unfortunately, the blowing up of the magazine, and the conduct of the Lieut.-Governor had so disspirited the officers of the garrison in general, that Col. Cox, having in vain endeavoured to excite them to new exertions, found himself compelled, prematurely and most involuntarily, to surrender the fortress at the moment when the Duke of Wellington had commenced the assembling of his army in the neighbourhood of Celerico and Alverca, and had his head-quarters at the latter town.

That the capitulation, with respect to the militia, was violated, is most certain, nor can any statement of Col. Pellet's possibly refute the fact. Before the capitulation, both D'Alorna and the traitor Pampluna, taking advantage of a flag of truce, had approached the walls, and spoken to the soldiers upon them, in a most improper manner, but without producing any effect. Besides, the service on which Massena proposed to employ the militia, was not of a nature likely to inspire them with any emotions of enthusiasm; nor, least of all, was it probable that they would be influenced by the motives ascribed to them by Col. Pellet. They were to be formed into a corps of pioneers; Col. Cox remonstrated, upon the spot, against this intention of the French Marshal, which,

had the act been voluntary on the part of the soldiers, there could have been no reason for his doing. Indeed, it is scarcely possible that such should have been the case; as the militia of Portugal are either fathers of families, the eldest sons of widows, or persons, on account of their particular circumstances, exempted from the service of the line. But it would have been well if the author had consulted Marshal Beresford's orders of the day for the 6th and 11th of September, 1810. In those he would have found a full explanation of all the circumstances that occurred, and of which the Marshal must have had the fullest, the most direct, and the most immediate information. The statement which Col. Napier might there have read, carries along with it the conviction of its truth; and, as in those orders we find Lord Beresford condemning the troops of the line, not only for taking service with the enemy, but, for their reason in so doing, which was, as they had communicated to him, the hope of securing an immediate and easy opportunity of escaping; as we also find him fully acquitting the militia of any participation in such an act, and praising their determination to abstain from the adoption of any such measures, under any pretence; and, moreover, as it is clear that these orders must have been written at the moment, and on the most certain intelligence of the conduct and dispositions of the troops—we conceive that they ought to be implicitly confided in on this point, and that the representations of Col. Pellet should be altogether set aside as misapprehensions, originating in an inadequate knowledge of the circumstances. We would, on other grounds, refer Col. Napier to "the Orders of the

Day" alluded to above. It is a publication with which he appears wholly unacquainted. The examination of its contents may serve to furnish him with a higher opinion of the talents and conduct of Marshal Beresford than he has hitherto exhibited himself willing to entertain.

I have entered into the foregoing explanation as introductory to the passage which I am about to quote; a passage as unjustifiable as any historian ever penned, and conveying an assertion not only entirely destitute of foundation, but directly contrary to the real state of the case. Our author says,* "Bareiros having joined the enemy, escaped punishment; but Da Costa being tried, was afterwards shot as a traitor, by the orders of Marshal Beresford —his cowardice and mutiny merited this chastisement (chastisement with a vengeance!); yet the only evidence against him was an explanatory letter written to Lord Liverpool by Cox, while a prisoner at Verdun."—Colonel Napier is never slow in hazarding even the boldest assertions; but he very rarely condescends to inform the reader of the authority on which he hazards them. On this occasion he has followed his usual custom. He has made a most serious accusation against Lord Beresford, and one absolutely untrue in all its bearings. It has been observed, that the unfortunate Da Costa was not a traitor in the sense implied by Col. Napier; but his cowardice was as bad as treason. Such, indeed, were the consequences that, under the circumstances of those times, a commander who had not brought him to trial and executed upon him the

* Vol. iii., page 306.

utmost rigour of the law, would have deserved the severest reprehension, and have proved himself perfectly incompetent for so important a post as that in which Marshal Beresford was placed. Never, perhaps, was there a situation which required, in so great a degree from the chief who filled it, an accurate knowledge of the passions and the tempers of men—a strong, cool, and discriminating judgment—a patient, persevering, and determined mind—and a resolution which was not to be turned by any consideration from the course that he perceived to be most beneficial to the general cause, and to the object he was engaged in.

Lord Beresford's task was one of extraordinary magnitude and importance. He was not only called upon to discipline the Portuguese troops, but to reawaken in the breasts of officers and soldiers, and indeed of the whole nation itself, the sentiments of patriotism, and the high sense of military honour. These feelings, though natural to them as a nation, had for a length of time lain dormant and inactive: it was indispensable that they should be again aroused, to render the people worthy of those companions in arms, in alliance with whom, under the guidance of the great chief, they were destined to act as the liberators of Europe. By the concurrent testimony of friend and foe; nay more, according to the very facts related by Col. Napier, which are always in contradiction to the conclusions he draws from them, Marshal Beresford most fully justified the confidence that had been placed in him; and discharged, in a manner the most admirable and efficient, the arduous labour to which he was appointed. The conduct of the

Portuguese army, throughout the whole course of the war, affords a proof of his talents and a memorial of his fame, of which he can neither be deprived by the bold attacks of open defamation, nor by the false candour and sly insinuations of a more covert malignity. On assuming his command, the only condition which the Marshal made with the British and the Portuguese governments was, that the entire distribution and control over all rewards and punishments in the Portuguese army should be confided to his hands alone; and the case of the Lieut.-Governor of Almeida was, perhaps, the only case of punishment in which he had recourse to the corroborating judgment of his great chief. It was one of immense importance, not only on account of the great misfortune which Da Costa's conduct had occasioned, and the rank of the person implicated, but also on account of the impression which the execution of the sentence might produce on the nation at large, and on the army in particular. In this instance it was thought advisable to submit the case to the consideration and determination of the Duke of Wellington. The facts and proceedings were as follows :—The day after the fall of Almeida, Marshal Beresford received the fullest information of all the particulars from three engineer officers, who had been attached to the garrison, and who, having made their escape immediately after the capitulation, came to his head-quarters at Avillans da Ribeira. The Lieut.-Governor Da Costa, either by the consent of the French commander, or by his own contrivance, returned soon after the capture of the fortress to Portugal, and withdrew himself to his province and home, in Tras os Montes, with the

intention of residing there in retirement, and apart from all military affairs. But this was no sooner known than he was ordered to repair to Lisbon, to attend a court-martial on his conduct. A considerable time had elapsed between his offence and his trial. Col. Cox had reported to the British government the circumstances relative to his surrender of Almeida; and this report, which had been transmitted to Lord Wellington, was by him forwarded to Marshal Beresford. Besides this report, other and fuller communications were received from Col. Cox; and his evidence, authenticated according to the forms prescribed by the laws of Portugal, was procured and produced. But the details, thus furnished by the English governor, desirable as they were to corroborate and confirm the statements of the other witnesses, were by no means necessary at the court-martial, to substantiate the charges against Da Costa. The facts had all been stated to Marshal Beresford; first, by the three engineer officers, and, afterwards, by a multitude of others. But certainly the views of Col. Napier must be most confined indeed, when, after having himself detailed the open and publicly scandalous conduct of the Lieut.-Governor and of Col. Bareiros—after describing the rest of the native officers (which of course includes all those belonging to a garrison of 3500 men), as disturbed by fear or swayed by the influence of those two, and as more willing to follow than to oppose their dishonourable proceedings—after relating that Da Costa expressed his resolution to hoist the white flag in opposition to the governor's orders, and after having expressly stated that Da Costa was

brought to a court-martial,—I say the views of Col. Napier must indeed be most narrow and confined, when, after showing that such a crowd of witnesses in support of the charges against Da Costa were within reach, he could thus overlook his own representations, and assert, in the very face of them, that "the only evidence was an explanatory letter written to Lord Liverpool by Cox, while a prisoner at Verdun." This gross, dull, thoughtless assertion is more extraordinary, as the author was not ignorant that a great part of the Portuguese garrison at Almeida had, by various means, effected their escape, and found their way back to Portugal. It fact, four-fifths were already returned. The statement of Cox would therefore form only the *corpo di delitto*. It afforded the accusation on which the Lieut.-Governor was arraigned; and the author has most satisfactorily shewn that there could not have been any, even the slightest, difficulty in procuring evidence of the facts of which he was accused. The court-martials was assembled at Lisbon: the Marshal himself was at the time absent in the provinces. No British officer was on the court. This had been cautiously avoided, as liable to invidious construction. The trial lasted a considerable time—the fullest evidence was adduced—a great number of witnesses were examined—and, after due and mature and impartial deliberation, the prisoner was found guilty, and adjudged to suffer death, by a jury of his countrymen. According to the usual form, the proceedings of the court-martial were then transmitted to the Judge-Advocate-General, a person of the first law rank, and of the highest tribunal in Portugal,

and distinguished for his knowledge and integrity. He most carefully went through the examinations, and reported to Lord Beresford that the trial was in all respects legal in its form; that the evidence was full and sufficient; and that the judgment which had been passed, was completely authorized. As I have already said, the Duke of Wellington was consulted by Lord Beresford on the military and political necessity of carrying this sentence into execution; and it was only after the most mature deliberation that that measure was finally adopted. Is it necessary to make any further comment on the bold and unhesitating assertion of Col. Napier, that "there was no other evidence against Da Costa, but an explanatory letter from Cox to Lord Liverpool?" And is it by the loose and random representations of so glossy and superficial a writer, that a veteran of Lord Beresford's standing, and achievements, and distinction, is to be judged? We refer to this passage as a fair specimen of the historian's manner of composition, of his prodigality of assertion, and his parsimony of proofs. Col. Napier is certainly not to be numbered among those who think it better that a hundred guilty should escape, than that one innocent should suffer. He dashes about his inconsiderate censures without any regard for whose honour or character he may wound; and, though a soldier himself, appears to have no sympathy in the common sentiment of all military men, that a soldier's honour is dearer than his life. But let that pass:—Col. Napier says "Da Costa was tried, and that the only evidence against him was an explanatory letter from Cox to Lord Liverpool." To conclude the observation on this passage, I would

just ask Col. Napier whether he ever saw the report of the court martial? and I can tell him he never did.—What is then his authority for this assertion?

I now proceed to remark on the historian's account of the battle of Busaco.—It does not, indeed, concern the principal subject of these Strictures, for Marshal Beresford is not mentioned in it; and, with the exception of one instance, where he particularizes the 8th Portuguese regiment most erroneously and most injudiciously, Col. Napier has hardly deigned to notice that the Portuguese troops were at all present in the action, though they constituted more than one half of the army engaged. But there are circumstances connected with the battle of Busaco which as much deserve commemoration in a history of the Peninsular war as any thing narrated in the pages of our author. It is well known to every individual who then served in Spain, that, from the time of the battle of Talavera, a general spirit of despondency pervaded the officers of the British army; and that they were not only persuaded, but were too much addicted to give utterance to their persuasion, of the impossibility of our remaining in Portugal. Many reasons for maintaining this opinion were familiarly and publicly alleged, of which the principal was the little, or indeed the absence of all, reliance that could be placed on the support of the Portuguese forces. This injurious opinion of our allies involved, as an inevitable consequence, that it was impossible for 22, or 25,000 British troops alone to defend the country against the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. —No credit was given to the discipline, nor was the slightest confidence placed in the courage, of

the native forces. The man who ventured to drop but a favourable hint of their efficiency, was silenced with shouts of derision. The affair on the Coa under Gen. Crawfurd, which has been related by Col. Napier, ought, in a great degree, to have corrected this unjust estimation of the Portuguese army: but, from the unfair and unfounded reports respecting their conduct which were spread abroad, and chiefly by Gen. Picton, it produced quite a different effect, and confirmed the disadvantageous opinions which were held respecting them. Now, Col. Napier should have known and recounted, that the battle of Busaco rectified this false and most prevalent opinion. It formed an epoch of great consequence in the Peninsular war; it fixed the confidence of the British army in that of Portugal; and inspired the Portuguese with corresponding feelings towards the British. Those feelings of mutual confidence were never after shaken; and, I believe, there cannot be found another instance in the whole history of the world, where the armies of two allied nations have, for so long a space of time and through such eventful scenes, preserved so intimate a connexion and so uninterrupted a harmony. Col. Napier has forgotten, on this occasion, to speak of the Portuguese as they deserved. Their behaviour was the admiration of the whole British army: it was at Busaco that the Portuguese Caçadores first manifested that decided bravery which distinguished them; it was there that they put in their claim, which was afterwards acknowledged, to be numbered among the very highest class of European light troops. The regular infantry was equally distinguished. The 8th regi-

ment, the latest at that time completed and disciplined, instead of acting as the historian states, charged under the command of Lieut.-Col. Douglas, with the 45th and 88th British;* and, so far were they from having been driven back, that the complaint against them was their having pursued the flying enemy too far and too close; and that, by an excess of ardour not unusual in young troops, they had prevented the fire of the more steady veteran corps from taking effect. The 19th Portuguese regiment, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Macbean, was posted nearly in front of the convent. Before them was a short plain gradually inclining to the edge of the steep descent of the hill. One of Ney's columns, having succeeded in ascending the steep, formed and advanced upon the plain: when about half way up, the 19th regiment charged them with the bayonet, and drove them headlong down the steep:—a heavy battery opened upon them from the opposite side of the ravine:—the regiment, immediately under the fire, re-formed; faced to the right about; and, as if manœuvring on a parade, regained its original position amid the acclamations of all the left of the British army, who were spectators of their conduct. This is only one, out of innumerable instances, in which the Portuguese distinguished themselves. Wherever the opportunity presented itself, they exhibited an equal degree of coolness and intrepidity; and though, as the author states, the victory which was gained at Busaco was followed by the retreat of the whole army, I am sure every officer of that army will con-

* Lord Beresford's order of the day, 28th Sept., and Lord Wellington's of the 30th.

fess that the greatest possible advantages accrued from it. All despondency from that moment was at an end, and its place was supplied by the most cheering confidence of success. These, surely, were circumstances which ought not to have been omitted in any relation of the events of the Peninsular war; they form an important and essential part of the history. How chanced it that Col. Napier has altogether avoided bringing so interesting a matter before the view of the reader?

Speaking of Marshal Beresford's proceeding to take the command of the troops on the left bank of the Tagus, the author enumerates fully and justly the positions and precautions which were adopted. He then proceeds to say:* "in addition to these general precautions, the Marshal erected batteries opposite the mouth of the Zezere. But, against the advice of the engineers, he placed them at too great a distance from the river, and in other respects unsuitable, and offering nothing threatening to the enemy; for the French craft dropped down frequently towards Santarem, without hindrance, until Col. Colborne, of the 66th regiment, moved a guard boat close to the mouth of the Zezere, disposing fires in such a manner on the banks of the Tagus, that nothing could pass without being observed." In this passage, according to his ordinary custom, the author sins against facts, by giving an erroneous construction to what he reads; and by adopting, without sufficient investigation, the shallow views and false conclusions of his informants.

Col. Napier speaks of engineers.—This is an in-

* Page 393.

genious multiplication of his authority, and is intended to give a weight and consequence to the single and unsupported opinion of Captain Squires, which, but for this artifice, it might chance to want. A letter from this officer is given in the author's Appendix. It is, I conclude, introduced in confirmation of the historian's assertion; but only serves to show how very foolish a thing it is for a subaltern officer, instead of obeying orders and attending simply to his own duty, to erect himself into a judge of the conduct of his superiors and commanders. Capt. Squires, poor fellow, forming his opinion of a great and extended combination from the trifling part entrusted to his dispatch, as if that little part was a whole, has most absurdly mistaken the object of the work which he was desired to execute; and complains that it was not *offensive*, when it was only designed, and could only be designed, as *defensive*. The Captain says,— "Thank God, I protested for my own credit, against these batteries from the first, in my reports which were sent to Lord Wellington; and now, I verily believe, the Marshal himself is ashamed of their construction." The latter part of this *assertion* is perfectly gratuitous. Marshal Beresford need be nothing less than ashamed of the construction of those works; and the belief of the Captain, fortunately not the great Captain whose opinion we shall soon see was very different, only affords another instance in proof of the facility with which he adopted, and the tenderness with which he cherished, any notion that flattered his self-conceit. Capt. Squires informs us that he had expressed his opinion of these batteries to Lord Wellington. What was the result of his com-

munication? Did Lord Wellington condescend to return him any answer? Did he stop the progress of the works?—Really, if the Captain had any sagacity, he might very readily have inferred from the neglect with which his suggestions were received, that the Commander-in-Chief was by no means of his mind upon this subject. But, be that as it may, to correct Col. Napier, and to rebut the representation of Capt. Squires, and to assist the labours of any future historian, who may be willing to give the public an honest account of the war in the Peninsula, I will just state what the Marshal's object was, in having these works erected, and what was the effect of them. In a letter from Lord Viscount Wellington to Lord Liverpool, of the 12th November, 1811, he says,—"The enemy continue to construct boats on the Zezere, and have shown much jealousy of the *measures adopted by our troops on the left bank of the Tagus, to command by their fire, the communication between the Zezere and the Tagus.*" Col. Napier himself also, may be quoted in justification of the measures which he has so extraordinarily disapproved of. Speaking of the necessity under which Marshal Massena lay, of making his retreat, he says:*—"Massena could only choose then, to force the passage of the Tagus alone, or to wait until Soult appeared on the left bank, or to retreat. For some time he seemed inclined for the first, *showing great jealousy of the works opposite the mouth of the Zezere,* and carrying his boats on wheel-carriages along the banks of the Tagus, as if to alarm Beresford, and oblige him to concentrate to his left; yet that General

* Pages 452, 453.

relaxed nothing of his vigilance, neither spy nor officer passed his lines of observation, and Massena knew generally, that Soult was before Badajoz, but nothing more." What then becomes of the author's censure on the position of the batteries opposite the Zezere? Has he not written and published in this passage, a refutation of his own observations? Has he not himself pointed out the extraordinary effect of the measure?—A stronger evidence of the Marshal's military jndgment and foresight in the establishment of those works cannot be imagined, than is given by Col. Napier himself. He makes it appear that they deterred Massena from attempting his first and most favourite project, under the circumstances in which he was placed. The historian's general mode of appreciating Lord Beresford, is very little in harmony with the facts which truth has here compelled him to relate of that great commander. Indeed, as has often been said, if Col. Napier had omitted his own comments, and allowed the reader to form an unbiassed conclusion from the circumstances related, his Lordship would have had very little to complain of; even though, as to the facts themselves, it is very evident that the historian has been frequently misled. Thus it is clear that the object in constructing the batteries in question, was merely to command the embouchure of the Zezere into the Tagus, and the passage of the latter river at that spot. The enemy were building boats in the Zezere; and it was therefore presumed that any attempt to reach the left bank of the Tagus, would most likely be made from that place, which was at the extremity of our right, and at which the troops, who were stationed there, were very distant

from any support. It is unnecessary to mention the other reasons which existed for curbing the enemy at this point, and induced the erection of the batteries in question. I have said that Capt. Squires wholly mistook their object. He absolutely complains, that —"The enemy's bridge (over the Zezere) was about half-a-mile from the mouth of the river, one mile by measurement from the nearest of the heights which we had crowned with an eight-gun battery." Intimating, or perhaps if the remainder of this letter were given, pointing out the impossibility of the batteries acting as an annoyance to that bridge. I believe there never was a shot fired from any one of those batteries at the bridge, which was not even visible from our position. They were never, indeed, made use of. The case contemplated by the Marshal in ordering the erection of them, which was the enemy's attempting to cross the Tagus, never occurred. But will Col. Napier presume to say, while his own text literally gives evidence of the contrary, that the fact of these batteries being planted as they were, did not alone prevent the attempt's being made? The *first* object of all works of this description is to deter the enemy from undertaking any given operation; the *second* object is to counteract his measures, and punish his temerity if he does undertake it. Col. Napier says, "that, against the advice of the engineers, the Marshal placed the batteries at too great a distance from the river." Now Captain Squires' letter does not say this, nor any thing like it. I must, therefore, consider this account as one of the author's hasty and unconsidered statements, and summon his friend the engineer to bear testimony in favour of

Lord Beresford, against so groundless and absurd an assertion. Squires is the only authority to which Col. Napier deigns to refer. In the latter part of tl extract which is given from his letter, it is distinctly said, that—"on the *nearest* of the heights to the Zezere (or to the other side of the Tagus) was constructed an eight-gun battery." Now, most gentle reader, I will leave you to reconcile these accounts. The historian says, "the batteries were too *distant* from the river." The engineer, that—"one of them was upon the *nearest* height." How the Marshal was to place them nearer the river, the Colonel does not condescend to tell us. The Colonel and the Captain must discuss that point, and settle it between them.—But we shall again encounter, and have to deal with these allies, warring against the fame of the Marshal. —The author further states, on his own authority as it would appear, that "the French craft from the Zezere dropped down frequently towards Santarem." This is, I confess, a circumstance which we, upon the spot, were never before informed of: I can assert most confidently, that such an event occurred but once, on a dark night, when the Tagus was full and rapid; and we understood, at the time, that only two boats succeeded in getting down the river. I must however admit that, if they waited for and chose their opportunity, it was very difficult to prevent the run of a boat or two; but that they dropped down *frequently*, was certainly not the case. By the desire of the Marshal, after the escape of the two boats just mentioned, a vessel was regularly placed by Lieut.-Col. Colborne after dark towards the embouchure of the Zezere, and remained there during the night.

The author of this veritable History appears quite ignorant that it could not have retained its station during the day; as the enemy, with their musquetry, might very easily have marked out and killed every man that it contained. I have, in my former Strictures, observed on Col. Napier's extraordinary propensity of attributing to the ill conduct of Marshal Beresford all the little, accidental, inevitable mischances that occurred in the affairs under his command; influenced by the same spirit, he always speaks of every successful and well considered action, not only as originating in some subaltern officer, but as if it had been commenced and executed in opposition to the Marshal's wishes and opinion. I shall have occasion to point out several instances of this uncandid mode of dealing.

My former Strictures have exposed the historian's ignorance of those very localities on which his military criticisms are grounded. He is not at all improved in this particular. I have again to observe an error into which he has fallen with respect to the Tagus. In speaking of the retreat of the French from Santarem,* and enumerating their practicable lines of retreat, he first states that they "could pass the Tagus between Punhete and Abrantes, by boats, or by fords which were always practicable after a week of dry weather." I will not here enter into any question with Col. Napier as to the number of boats in the enemy's possession; but, granting him as many as would have been requisite, it is very certain that

* Page 455.—As it may be of some assistance to Col. Napier in correcting future editions of his work, or in rendering the remainder of his romance more consistent with those local facts which may give an air of fidelity to

the French neither had, nor could have, any boat above the Zezere. The question would be, then, how these boats were to have been brought there; as they must have been conveyed against the current, a process of very slow operation, and one to which, perhaps, the so much abused batteries opposite to the Zezere might have formed no inconsiderable impediment.—Indeed, Col. Napier deserves my sincere acknowledgments for having found out a case, which alone would have justified their erection; as, in the face of those batteries it would have been totally impossible for the enemy to have conveyed his boats up the stream. As to the author's assertion, that the Tagus might have been forded after a week of dry weather, nothing can be more entirely imaginary. The whole Allied army, and the whole French army, know the absurd incorrectness of this statement. We had frequently, whilst before Santarem and on the left of the Tagus above it, much more than a week's dry weather; but no one ever heard of a ford. After the retreat of the French, as we could not find any of the 80 boats which are said to have been in their

it, I will give him a list of the fords of the Tagus below Abrantes, from the MS. note of a highly distinguished general officer.

"FORDS IN THE TAGUS BELOW ABRANTES.

Le Redimoinhos	½	league below Abrantes.
Barquinha . .	2	fords, 2 leagues below the Zezere, or Punhete.
Pinheiro . .	1	
Chamusca . .	2	these all lower still. "
Santarem . .	2	
Bemfica . .	1	
Escarrofin . .	1	
Salvaterra . .	2	

but any person knowing the Tagus, must be aware that it is only in *dry weather, in the height of summer*, that the above is the case."—*From Sir H. F.'s Official Reports.*

possession, we were obliged to remove those that had composed our bridge at Abrantes, to form another at Tancos, four miles below Punhete, for the conveyance of the Allied army from the left bank to join Lord Wellington in pursuit of the enemy; but as to any ford on that part of the Tagus, no such thing was ever thought of: and yet, at this very time, our author speaks of a line of retreat being open by means of fords, to Massena!

Having given an account of the siege, defence, and loss of Campo Mayor, which was taken by the French, Col. Napier says:* "Mortier then returned to the Guadiana, leaving La Tour Maubourg to dismantle the works, and remove the artillery and stores to Badajos."

"Such," he continues, "was the posture of affairs when Beresford, who had quitted the northern army after the combat of Foz d'Arouçe, arrived at Portalegre with twenty thousand infantry, two thousand cavalry, and eighteen guns." I shall here merely observe that the whole force was about 20,000 men. It will be the shortest way to give a succinct account of the events near Campo Mayor; and then observe on the errors which exist in the historian's narration of them.

On his arrival in the Alemtejo, Marshal Beresford, having pushed on his troops with the hope of relieving Campo Mayor, assembled them at Portalegre. At this place the fall of the town was reported to him. Learning, at the same time, that the enemy appeared unconscious of his near approach, the Marshal thought to surprise them. With that object he fixed his head-

* Pages 494, 495.

quarters at Monte de Reguenga, and encamped his troops in the vicinity of that place, at a distance of about two leagues from Campo Mayor. Without making any appearance in the neighbourhood of the enemy, the Marshal advanced from his station on the morning of the 26th, and at an early hour reached the foot of the height, from the further descent of which the town, though at a considerable distance, might be distinctly seen. On this hill it was that, for the first time, some French cavalry were observed covering some officers who were reconnoitring. From the reports of this reconnoitring party the enemy received their first intimation of the actual advance of the Allies. They were immediately driven in, and the troops quickly followed them towards Campo Mayor. When the Marshal, at the head of the cavalry, reached the point of descent towards the town, and from which it was fully visible, he saw the French filing out of it, and forming in column on the glacis. The walls of the place also were covered with a considerable number of people, but whether troops or inhabitants it was not at that distance possible to discern. Some light horse were sent down to reconnoitre; and General Long, who then commanded the Allied cavalry, was directed to proceed to turn the enemy, and to threaten his line of retreat. This was done with a view of trying whether the French commander intended to abandon the place, or to remain under the protection of its guns and defend it. General Long was ordered only to make such a circuit as would be just sufficient to keep his troops clear of the guns upon the works. He had not gone far before the Marshal, perceiving that he was taking

far too wide a range, sent Lieut.-Col. Hardinge with orders for him to circle nearer the town, in obedience to the instructions that had been given him. General Long still continued to widen his circuit; and, a second time, Lieut.-Col. Hardinge was sent after him, to express the Marshal's displeasure, and with directions for him to approach the enemy. The General alleged some foolish reasons for thus obstinately persisting in his most extraordinary detour; and, in the mean time, the enemy, perceiving the movement that was made, began to retire to Badajos. The Marshal, having directed the officer who commanded the division of infantry to advance as soon as he could ascertain that the town was evacuated, set off to discover General Long, who was now lost sight of. That officer had been expressly ordered not to charge the enemy's infantry under any pretence whatever, while they were in column and prepared, but to exert every means to harass and delay its progress, till the infantry of the Allies could come up. When the Marshal first got sight of the Allied cavalry, they were already in contact with the enemy, and the first thing he could discern was a charge made by the Portuguese cavalry against a column of French infantry. As might have been expected, the assailants were beaten off. At this time the Marshal came up with the heavy brigade of cavalry, commanded by the Hon. Col. de Grey, at a short distance in the rear of the others, and directed them to take post on a small height until he could examine what was going on in front. On reaching the contending troops, he discovered the brigade of Portuguese cavalry, which had charged

and was now reforming, and the enemy's column of infantry; but there were no longer any of the 13th Dragoons, or of the enemy's cavalry to be seen. Col. de Grey was then ordered up—the nearest guns were directed to advance with all possible speed—two from the German infantry brigade arrived, and a few rounds were fired into the enemy's column; but the horses were exhausted, and could not be made to keep pace with the French troops, who steadily pressed on at a very quick step, notwithstanding the cavalry of the Allies were threatening to charge them at every instant. The Marshal now heard from M. General Long, whose report was confirmed by Baron Trip, that the 13th Light Dragoons had, in the strangest manner, been taken prisoners bodily. Indeed the account which these officers delivered of the capture of the 13th was even more extraordinary than Col. Napier's description of their engagement. The Marshal finding it difficult to credit the account, expressed his astonishment that, in a plain, such as they were upon, no one man should have broken away. Still the assertion that such was the fact, could not be contradicted. The regiment had totally disappeared. The Portuguese brigade had likewise suffered in the charge which it had made, and the Marshal, seeing it was impossible to bring up his infantry, and that the cavalry had been brought into action in direct opposition to his orders, said he might perhaps take these 1300 men, the number they were estimated at, but, as he had already told General Long, he did not wish to mutilate or diminish his cavalry, at the very opening of the campaign, when their operations were to be carried on in a country of extensive plains,

and the enemy could always bring a superior force of horse against him. He therefore commanded the cavalry to desist from all further pursuit. With regard to the 13th Dragoons, the fact was this: General Long, coming from his circuit at less than a league from Campo Mayor, descended from the heights upon the left flank of the enemy. This column of infantry was headed by the French cavalry. The latter were charged by the 13th, who broke them entirely, and pursued them, in the most disorderly manner, a distance of about two leagues, even to and on the bridge of Badajos. Here some few of them were made prisoners. It was in this hunt, rather than military pursuit, that they came up with the French battering train, which was on the road to Badajos, and within half a league of the town, consequently a league and half distant from and in front of the spot on which the attack of the 13th had taken place. The Marshal, some time after the halt, was the first to perceive a column of troops advancing towards them from the direction of Badajos. On looking through the glass, he discovered it to be the 13th returning. Its commanding officer, on arriving, immediately rode up to Lord Beresford; but, though a particular friend, he was coldly and formally received. The Marshal drily inquired whether he thought he had proceded in a military manner in this mode of pursuing the enemy? and expressed his hope that, for the future, he would recollect that courage was not the only requisite either for troops or officers.

Such are the simple facts; but let any one compare them with Col. Napier's relation of them, and

he will find the same sort of resemblance as is usually found between a man and the caricature of him. There is a likeness, but every feature is disfigured and distorted. Neither Col. Colborne, nor any infantry, were near the scene of action. The French Hussars did *not* charge; it was the 13th, as stated by the two officers already named, that made the attack. The French in marching out had *not* the battering train with them; it was not less than two leagues in advance of them, and had left Campo Mayor before the enemy could have known of the approach of the Allies. When the 13th came up with it, there could be no support at hand; and the artillery men, by whom it was accompanied, were easily cut down and dispersed. It is evident that the French infantry could not "*return*" for guns which were a league and a half in front of them. Col. Napier's description of the battle between the 13th and French Hussars, must to the staid and sober citizen appear most particularly fine; and his visits to Astley's Amphitheatre will so far have enlightened his mind upon the subject of military operations, as to enable him to comprehend all the various manœuvres that he reads of. It was not improbably composed by the author, while his imagination was yet glowing with the representation of the scene in some Parisian theatre, which he visited, perchance, after dining with his friend Marshal Soult, and arranging the details of the romance, which they had determined between them on handing down to posterity, as the true and authentic account of the battle of Albuera. Col. Napier's report of this affair of the 13th is so curious

that I cannot refrain from laying it before the reader.* "While in this state, the French Hussars suddenly charging with a loose rein from behind their infantry, fell some on the Portuguese, and some on the 13th Dragoons. So fiercely did these last on both sides come together, that many men were dismounted by the shock, and both parties pierced clear through to the opposite side, then reformed, and passed again in the same fearful manner to their own ground. But Head's troopers rallied quicker than the French, and riding a third time closely in upon them, overthrew horse and man, receiving at the same time the fire of the infantry squares. Nevertheless, without flinching, they galloped upon the battering train, hewing down the gunners, and drawing up beyond the French line of march, barred the way, in expectation that the heavy cavalry would also fall on; but Beresford would not suffer the latter to charge, and the French infantry returned to their guns and resumed their march." The whole of this tale is suppositious: Col. Colborne was not on the right, he had not come up; he was in the rear, on the same line of march with the enemy. The 13th Dragoons never rallied to bar the enemy's advance. They never drew up, nor indeed ever stopped; neither, as it would appear from the author, was it the enemy's infantry, but the cavalry, that they attended to. They could not have waited till Beresford put the heavy cavalry in motion, as they were not on the ground, nor were they even in sight when he arrived. At the time of the charge, the French cavalry were close to their column of infantry; and the Marshal not

* Page 495.

having yet reached the spot, M. Gen. Long—instead of charging the Hussars in front, as he should have done, if he thought fit to make any attack at all, so as to drive them upon their infantry,—charged them in flank, and separated them from the latter, which was thus left quite clear on every front of its square. But I should like Col. Napier to inform me what the Portuguese brigade of cavalry was about, while these two corps of dragoons were performing the country dance which he has described? Did they stand looking on quietly to see fair play?—This is the employment assigned them by Col. Napier. The French infantry also appear to have been equally forbearing; they it seems did not fire till the third charge. But it is contrary to the fact, that the 13th Dragoons, after charging the French Hussars, "drew up" or "reformed;" neither is it true that the guns of the battering train were near this corps. The circumstances of the case were such as I have related; but Col. Napier is apt to be poetical in his prose, and, in describing battles and other occasions favourable to the exposition of his vocabulary, is always more than usually ambitious in his diction. He also every now and then displays a love of stage effect which is fearfully at variance with the simple, and plain and philosophic spirit of historical veracity.

The author writes, in italics*: "*To profit from*

* Page 496.—Since this work was completed, the author has been favoured with the sight of a copy of Col. Napier's History, enriched by the running marginal commentary of a highly distinguished general officer, who served under Lord Beresford in the Peninsular war. A few extracts from these remarks will be given as notes to the present publication. Opposite the passage quoted above, the General has written—"Should a General then commanding a corps d'armée, ride off with a flanking corps of five or six squadrons of cavalry?"

sudden opportunities, a General must constantly be with his advanced guard in an offensive movement;" and he adds, "when this combat commenced, Beresford was with the main body," The author is here quite misinformed. Beresford was *with the advanced guard*, or rather he was at the head of the column on its appearance over Campo Mayor. The whole army was close up, as the circumstance required. He sent M. General Long to manœuvre under his own eye; and he remained himself at the head of the infantry, ready to put it in motion, as soon as he should discover what were the intentions of the enemy, and whether the Allied infantry could follow the road that skirted the walls of Campo Mayor, without incurring the danger of being fired on from its ramparts. When he perceived that General Long still continued in his erroneous movement, even after the enemy were in motion, Beresford set off at full gallop after him (who had then been lost sight of); and though he had not reached the cavalry when the charge was made by the 13th; though, indeed, he did not see it; though he did not arrive early enough to stop the attack made by the Portuguese brigade; yet he came up immediately after, and in time to prevent the occurrence of still greater mischief and folly. The author proceeds to say: "Hence the Marshal, anxious to save his cavalry, which he knew could not be reinforced, would not follow up the first blow, truly observing that the loss of one regiment was enough."*—The author's object in the foregoing paragraph is somewhat obscure. Does he mean to censure or commend?—It is not very probable, that

* Page 496.

any General would feel inclined to follow up such a blow as that of losing a regiment; and Col. Napier states that, from the report he had received, the Marshal considered one regiment as already lost. It could not, therefore, I presume, be the author's object to blame Lord Beresford in this instance; and yet he appears reluctant to praise him. The historian continues: "but the regiment was not lost, and, the country being open and plain, the enemy's force and the exact posture of affairs were easy to be discerned."* Here, again, there appears an inclination to censure. But the country is not as the author would represent.—As far as a country is "open and plain" which is very clear of wood, and of which the irregularities and ascents are easy and gradual, it may certainly be called a plain and open country. But Col. Napier has just before stated that, "the Allies, passing over a wooded rise of ground, issued forth at the other side by some gentle slopes on either flank of the French, who were in a fine plain;"† and, as this was the very spot where Beresford found them, nothing can be more at variance than the several representations of the author. To place Lord Beresford in the wrong, which he is never loth to do, he here gives an unbounded plain for the operations of the army, where nothing can obstruct the sight; though he had just previously stated, that the Allied cavalry had descended from "*wooded heights* and *gentle slopes*, on both flanks of the enemy," who, nevertheless, were in a country "open and plain." The truth is, that, speaking as a military man, the country may very fairly be described in the

* Page 496. † Page 495.

words of Col. Napier: it was a plain and open country, in every respect well fitted for cavalry movements. The heights alluded to, were really only on the enemy's left flank as he retired; but, on this plain, there are great inequalities of ground, behind which any number of troops might be concealed; and it was round one of these eminences that the Marshal discovered, as is related above, the 13th winding, on its return from Badajos. The author has shown that the 13th, from the report of Baron Trip, had been given up as lost; and the circumstance of their not being discernible, must have been most apparent to Col. Napier, as he mentions Lord Beresford's observing on the spot, that "the loss of one regiment was enough." Could the posture of affairs have been as easily discovered as the historian reports, no one could for a moment have supposed or believed that the 13th was lost. Now it required no extent of view to see the enemy's infantry, as the Allied cavalry, and Beresford himself, were hovering round it, at a distance of a hundred yards. Col. Napier concludes his account of this affair, with an observation which we cannot pass over without comment:—"The 13th were reprimanded, perhaps justly, for having pursued so eagerly without orders; yet the unsparing admiration of the whole army consoled them." If the historian considers this as complimentary to the British army, I must say that I differ from him altogether; neither do I admit the fact. They never did, nor ever could, admire such conduct. They have too just an estimate of the qualities which are essential to the character of a good soldier, to yield "unsparing admiration" to a pro-

ceeding so unmilitary as that of the 13th. Col. Napier himself has admitted that their conduct was contrary to discipline: he does not deny that "*they were justly reprimanded.*" He ought, by the bye, to have said, that they had justly *exposed* themselves to reprimand; for I have good reason to believe, that the whole of the Marshal's censure on their temerity was confined to the formal reception, and the brief sentence of admonition which he addressed to Col. Head. I should think that the historian, on reviewing, in some calm moment, the sentiment which he has here expressed, must feel himself humbled as a British officer, at the thought of having thus endeavoured to encourage a line of conduct by his authority, which can only lead to the most fatal military consequences; and which, on this very occasion, if indeed it was not the entire cause of the enemy's escape, very greatly contributed to that result. • I am convinced that Col. Napier could never really desire to relax the salutary strictness of military discipline, or to disseminate principles, which, in the end, would prove destructive of all subordination in armies; but, writing under the guidance of the bewildering spirit of prejudice, and wording his sentences most curiously, with the design of leaving on the reader's mind an impression injurious to the reputation of Marshal Beresford, he involves himself in a world of errors, and contradictions, and inconsistencies; which, had he composed his volumes under the influence of a more generous and liberal spirit, he might have happily escaped.

I shall now proceed to notice the author's observations and opinions with regard to the operations that

immediately followed this affair, and the recapture of Campo Mayor. He says:* "Indeed so secretly and promptly had Lord Wellington assembled it (the corps under Marshal Beresford), that its existence was only known to the French General by the blow at Campo Mayor." † Does not Col. Napier think that some credit is due to the precautions and skill of Marshal Beresford, who prevented the enemy's attaining any knowledge of its existence, from the time of the corps being assembled, till it struck the first blow after several days' march? "But," adds the author, "to profit from such able dispositions, it was necessary to be as rapid in execution, giving the enemy no time to recover from his first surprise; and this was the more essential, because the breach in Badajoz was not closed, nor the trenches obliterated, nor the exhausted magazines and stores replenished. Soult had carried away six battalions and a regiment of cavalry, four hundred men were thrown into Olivenza, three thousand into Badajoz; thus, with the losses sustained during the operations, Mortier's numbers were reduced to less than ten thousand men; he could not, therefore, have maintained the line of the Guadiana and collected provisions also, and Beresford should instantly have marched upon Merida,‡ driven back the fifth corps,

* Page 497.

† "Without attempting to take from Lord Wellington any part of his great military reputation, it is but justice to say, that 'this secret and prompt appearance' of the corps at Campo Mayor, was the work of Marshal Beresford."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

‡ "Such a movement would have been at once impracticable with relation to his resources, inconsistent with the combined views of his object, and in contravention of his instructions."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napiers' History.*

and opened a fresh communication by Jerumenha with Elvas; the fall of Badajoz would then have been inevitable." The manner in which Col. Napier thus cavalierly captures his fortress in the last paragraph, is deserving of infinite admiration. Unhappily, though the historian may not be aware of the circumstance, there is a wide difference between theory and practice. Col. Napier would hardly believe how much easier it is for an author to march and fight and conquer, pen in hand, upon paper, in his study, than it is for the General to realize those views in the field, who has to calculate the nature of the country in which his operations are to be carried on; its roads, hills, and rivers; the physical powers of man and beast; the actual condition in which each may chance to be; their respective wants; the supplies of every description; and all the consequences, near and remote, probable and contingent, of any given measure that he may take in hand, not merely as it may affect the portion of the army under his command, but as it may bear generally upon the whole plan of operations, and the success of the cause which he is but a part in defending. In the present instance we are afforded a striking illustration of the facility with which the historian may leisurely pass along the paths of imaginary conquest, and overleap the difficulties which lie in the way of the General. Col. Napier, after the capture of Campo Mayor, manœuvres his troops with the most enviable ease—he encounters no obstacles to his plans—his soldiers want no repose or refreshment—his horses are always replete with life and spirit—the roads are all Macadamised for his

convenience—at the end of every league he and his forces are welcomed at hotels plentifully supplied—the heaviest artillery is first gratuitously furnished, and then made to traverse any distance at a dash of the pen; and fortresses, impregnable to the science of the engineer, and exhausting to the spirit of a long-expecting and over-laboured soldiery, fall, in a moment, when touched with a magic sprinkling of his ink! But to all these suppositious triumphs of Col. Napier there existed one slight impediment—an impediment far, I grant, beneath the consideration of so lofty a genius, infinitely too low in subject to be touched by the swelling graces of his rhetoric; but, unhappily, fully sufficient to check the progress of Marshal Beresford and his army. The whole of Cole's division—that is, about one-third of the entire corps—had no shoes to their feet. But I have not yet done with the author on this subject. I am much mistaken if I cannot acquit the Marshal of all suspicion of error, and prove the author strangely deficient both in military judgment and in correct information with regard to matters of fact. But I shall first make a further citation from his work, that all his comments upon this operation may be answered simultaneously.

"Beresford, neglecting this happy opportunity, put his troops into quarters round Elvas, induced thereto by the fatigues and wants of the soldiers,* especially those of the fourth division, who had been

* Page 498. "Marshal Beresford *was induced thereto* by his instructions, by circumstances which he could not control, and by the unchangeable nature of the case."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

marching incessantly since the 6th of the month, and were barefooted and exhausted." I feel myself very strongly tempted to stop here in possession of the author's own evidence against himself, and in justification of the Marshal. He confesses that there existed a physical impossibility of moving the troops. He might also have recollected that Lord Beresford had, in the course of service, received a most impressive lesson on the miseries that result from pressing an exhausted soldiery to renewed exertions; for he had commanded a brigade under Sir John Moore in Galicia, the disasters of whose army were entirely caused by the exhaustion of the troops, and more particularly by their want of shoes. But of this hereafter. "The Marshal," the historian adds, "had been instructed by Lord Wellington to throw a bridge over the Guadiana at Jerumenha, to push back the fifth corps, and to invest Olivenza and Badajos." I must here protest against the faculty which the author pretends to, of being intuitively acquainted with all instructions given and received. He seldom informs us how he comes in possession of such knowledge; and certainly, on the present occasion, as, indeed, on almost every other, I find him either stating these matters from mere empty, unauthenticated conjecture, or, where he has any authority, omitting to state the whole. An example of this want of candour will here be given. The author proceeds to say: "The Portuguese government had not only undertaken to provide the means for these operations, but had actually reported that provisions, shoes, battering guns, ammunition and transport were then collected in Elvas and Jeru-

menha."* I have two good and satisfactory reasons for condemning the whole of this as erroneous. *First*, I don't think Lord Wellington would disclose beforehand his intended operations against the enemy to the Portuguese Regency; and it is only necessary to consult the conduct and inimical feelings of that body towards Lord Wellington, as related by the author himself, to verify that supposition: and, *secondly*, I am confident he would never have put it in the power of the Regency—hostilely disposed towards him as they were—to thwart his operations in the most effective manner. The truth is, the Portuguese government were never so entrusted. They never had any thing to do with furnishing the British troops, except in transport; and as there were special functionaries at Lisbon, who were appointed for that object, and who had control over the territorial magistrates, nothing more was ever required from the government than to remove, or to punish the persons who omitted, or were careless in the execution of this duty. The British Commissaries were charged with the task of procuring and furnishing the provisions and other necessaries of the army; and, as all the Portuguese arsenals were under the direct control of Marshal Beresford, he himself gave the orders for guns, ammunition, stores, &c., as the occasion might require. The author continues: "All these circumstances combined to point out Merida as the true line of operation;† moreover,

* Page 498.

† "Lord Wellington, who knew the country well, does not seem to have ever contemplated this; and all the circumstances of the period considered, it would assuredly have been a very false movement."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

plenty of food was to be had on the left bank of the Guadiana, and the measures necessary to remedy the evil state of affairs on the right bank, did not require the presence of an army to protect them. The great distress of the fourth division for shoes, alone offered any serious obstacle; but, under the circumstances, it would not have been too much to expect a momentary effort from such an excellent division, or it might without danger even have been left behind. Marshal Beresford preferred halting until he could procure the means of passing at Jerumenha; an error which may be considered as the first and principal cause of those long and bloody operations which afterwards detained Lord Wellington nearly two years on the frontiers of Portugal."* I will now comment upon what has been quoted; and I might, very laconically, and in a single sentence, exonerate Marshal Beresford from the weighty censure, which this most impartial, correct, and well-informed of all historiographers has cast upon his devoted head, by simply stating that the Marshal acted in strict conformity with his instructions. He was expressly instructed to proceed by Jerumenha, and not by Merida, as the case had been foreseen and discussed previously to his leaving Lord Wellington. How comes it then that Col. Napier, who pretends to know what Lord Beresford's instructions were, has omitted this very essential point? Did he not know them?—Why then does he affirm that he did? Did he know them?—Why then does he suppress the fact which nullifies his censure of that distinguished General?

* Pp. 498, 499. "This is a gratuitous assumption, in no respect borne out either by circumstances or events."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

The historian is in a dilemma; let him escape from it as he can. But it is pretty evident that the author *was* informed of the instructions given to the Marshal; and, while he condemns him for not having followed the course which he imagines the most expedient, he actually publishes, in a preceding page, the very document which proves that the Marshal had no option in the matter. "He had been instructed by Lord Wellington to throw a bridge over the Guadiana at Jerumenha, to push back the fifth corps, and to invest Olivenza and Badajos."* Can any thing be more clear—taking it for granted that the order, in which these acts were to be performed, is given correctly by the author—than that the Marshal was *first* to throw a bridge over the Guadiana, and *then* to drive back the fifth corps? And this view of the tenor of his instructions is confirmed by his besieging Olivenza, in front of and near Jerumenha, and afterwards proceeding against Badajos. Lord Beresford then is fully exculpated. If any one is to be blamed, it is the author of his instructions. If Col. Napier is a better General on this occasion than the person from whom the measures that were pursued originated, his superiority is to be claimed over the Duke of Wellington, and not over Marshal Beresford. But as I cannot tacitly consent to allow this self-complacent gentleman so valuable a triumph, I shall give myself the trouble of proving to him, that he has argued altogether most ignorantly on the case; that the instructions received by the Marshal were wise and provident; that they were, in all respects, worthy the great Commander from whom they emanated;

* Page 498.

and also that, if the Marshal had had discretionary orders, he neither would nor could, under his circumstances, or hardly under any circumstances, have considered it wise to follow the line of conduct so rashly recommended by Col. Napier. I shall also shew that that officer is wrong in many of his facts; though he appears to have known enough of the position of affairs to have arrived at a different conclusion respecting them, if he really were a person of sound military judgment. On his arrival at Campo Mayor, Marshal Beresford was accompanied with three divisions of infantry—the second under Sir William Stewart, the fourth under Sir Lowry Cole, and the Portuguese division of Sir John Hamilton: he had of cavalry, one heavy brigade, the 13th light cavalry, and the Portuguese brigade. I believe I have pretty correctly stated their total force at about 20,000. I will now consider the position of this corps. When the Marshal put it in motion from the Tagus, he was informed that the British commissary in the Alemtejo had from two to three hundred thousand rations in store for his use. The commissary had been so drected, and had reported that he was in possession of them. But this officer had also been ordered to furnish a Spanish division, which had just previously been in that province, and most incautiously, without regard to its numbers, which had been specified to him, he had issued for its service whatever the commander had required. Owing to this inattention on the part of the commissary (whose name I think was Thompson), when Marshal Beresford arrived his store was actually empty. It was insufficient to supply the demands of the Allied forces even for the

day; and, as the author has said, the Marshal was obliged to draw upon the stores laid in for the garrison of Elvas. These were by no means more than were required for their object, and it would have been necessary to wait at least two days before a supply could be procured from that place sufficient for the whole corps at Campo Mayor. The Marshal's march to Badajos, by the way of Merida, would have occupied four days more, so that he could not have reached his point of destination in much less than a week. Does Col. Napier suppose that the enemy at Badajos would be idle all this time? Would he have failed to destroy the works of attack, and to clear the breach (by the bye the author himself states, that it never had been practicable), and to adopt such repairs as would have secured it against a *coup de main?* Has the historian given the Marshal any means of destroying even the slightest temporary works or repair? Has he supposed even that any such means were in existence? In fact, the Marshal had none whatever, and, as a military man of his corps, I know not what that General could have done on appearing before Badajos except blockading it, and we will by and by see how that matter would have stood. But it is asserted that the garrison had no provisions. On this point, I can cite the author as a pretty strong evidence against himself. It will be recollected that Badajos capitulated to the French on the 10th inst., and Col. Napier tells us, that the French commander was informed of the retreat of Massena, and of the advance of a strong body of the Allied army for the relief of the place, by the infamous governor who had unnecessarily surrendered it. In this he is perfectly

correct. Indeed, the very letter of Marshal Beresford, informing the governor of his near approach, was given over to the French General. Under these circumstances, is it to be believed for a moment that Soult, Mortier, or the active governor of the place, General Phillippon, or any other French General of the day, would have neglected to supply the place with provisions from the neighbouring country, where our author, though with a different view, informs us they were in the greatest plenty? The thing is quite impossible; no military reader, I am sure, can be of an opposite opinion. But what will he think of Col. Napier's credibility, when it is shown that the state of the garrison at Badajos was not with him a matter of speculation, but that he actually knew, and has acknowledged, that it was abundantly supplied. The author says:* "at this time (10th March) the great crisis of the campaign had passed, and a strong body of British and Portuguese troops were ready to raise the siege of Badajos. In three different ways, by telegraph, by a letter, and by a confidential messenger, the governor was informed that Massena was in full retreat, and that the relieving army was actually in march. The breach was still impracticable, *provisions were plentiful*, the garrison above 8000 strong." Thus the historian admits the breach had never been practicable; that on the 10th, only sixteen days previously, the garrison was abundantly supplied for 8000 men, whilst the country around was full of provisions; and yet, though such is the information of Col. Napier himself, when arguing for another object, he now says, with a view of depre-

* Pages 450, 451.

ciating Lord Beresford, that the movement of the Allies by Merida or Badajos was the more essential, "because the breach in Badajoz was not closed, nor the trenches obliterated, nor the exhausted magazines and stores replenished."—What weakness, what absurd contradiction!—The prejudiced ought to have good memories!—As has been stated, the breach never had been practicable. If the works erected against the fortress had not already been obliterated by the 13,000 men, whom the author represents as being at that time either within the walls, or in the neighbourhood of Badajos; there would have been no difficulty in levelling them with a third of the numbers, before Marshal Beresford could have reached the place which, by way of Merida, was no less than four days' march from Campo Mayor. It is certain that the magazines of provisions were not exhausted, and there is a passage in a despatch of Lord Wellington, which strongly corroborates this fact, and evinces that no great consequence was attached to the quantity of provisions introduced into the garrison at that time.

The despatch is dated Nissa, April 18, 1811. It says, "Marshal Sir William Beresford was not able to effect his passage across the Guadiana so soon as he expected, and the enemy have introduced some provisions into Elvas and Olivenza." Thus then, even had military and other circumstances allowed Marshal Beresford's proceeding to Merida, the result would not have been as the author states. It is not a fact, that "the fall of Badajoz would have been then inevitable."

As I have said, the author moves his forces with

admirable facility; but from Campo Mayor to Merida is one of the most difficult, as it is one of the worst, roads in the Peninsula. It would have occupied two days of heavy and most wearisome marches. From Merida to Badajos would have taken up two more; these, however, would have been comparatively easy. But, at the earliest, the Allies could not have arrived before Badajos till the fourth day after their leaving Campo Mayor. It has been already stated, that it would have required two days to provision them from Elvas. Then the division of Sir Lowry Cole was without shoes, and exhausted from the fatigues it had undergone. The author, as a military man, can have profited very little by his experience when he proposes to push on a body of men in such a condition; for it could have produced no other effect than that of rendering them totally unfit for service when they reached their destination. Soldiers without shoes, whatever their spirit may be, cannot march; and of this Lord Beresford had had sufficient, and melancholy, and heart-rending experience, when, in the retreat to Corunna under Sir John Moore, he found that neither exhortation, entreaty, nor even threats were of any avail to persuade the men not to stay behind; and that they answered his every attempt to urge them on by pointing to their bleeding feet, which incapacitated them from hastening their steps, and rendered it impossible for them to escape falling into the hands of the pursuing enemy. The want of shoes, and the exhaustion of the troops from over-forced marches, were the real causes of the losses of that army; and yet a forced march, under similar circumstances, is the very course that a regimental

officer, such as Col. Napier, presumes to censure so experienced an officer as Marshal Beresford for not having adopted. Such extreme presumption requires no comment beyond the relation of it. "But," says the author, "they (*i. e.* Cole's division) might be left behind." Again, how easily this gentleman arranges all his measures: "Lord Beresford," he adds, "would not have wanted them."—Indeed! We will assume that each of the divisions had 6000 men, making a total of 18,000 infantry. Gen. Hamilton's was the strongest: I will therefore suppose that the second, with Hamilton's division, made 13,000, and that the Marshal took all his cavalry, which amounted to 2000. His entire force, therefore, would have been 15,000 men. The force of the enemy, according to Col. Napier's account, was full 13,000. The numbers then were not very unequal; but, with his trifling superiority of 2000 troops, the Marshal was to constrain a garrison, and to beat back 10,000 excellent and veteran soldiers. But this is not all. He would also have had to feed his own army in despite of the enemy; and more than this, it is a fact which has been carefully kept out of sight, that Andalusia was close at hand, and that Marshal Soult was in that province with a very large force, 70,000 men. This is the author's own account; and, for once, he is not in error. But does Col. Napier, the personal friend of Soult, imagine that that intelligent commander would quietly see the fall of Badajos, or the defeat of Mortier? Would he not immediately have sent him such a reinforcement as would have made him more than equal to Marshal Beresford? No one will doubt it. At a subsequent period, as will be

hereafter pointed out, he came to the assistance of Badajos even before it was severely pressed. Look then at the military position in which the Allies would have been placed, if Col. Napier's plan had been acted upon. In the neighbourhood of Badajos they would have been in a *cul-de-sac*, from which there was no escape; and unless the Marshal received the most timely notice of any reinforcements that might be sent to Mortier, his destruction would have been inevitable. But how was he to obtain this intelligence? Mortier, from his position, could and would have intercepted all such communication, while the Marshal could not as yet have organized his means for rapid information round the flanks of the enemy. But supposing the French had assembled at Almendrelejo, they would have been as near Merida as Badajos is; and if the Marshal had even been instructed of their movements, and got off in time to reach Merida before the enemy, the latter could have marched along the chord of the great bow which he had to make, and having passed through Badajos, have intercepted him in his retreat from Merida to Portugal. On the third day after leaving Almendrelejo, the enemy might have placed himself across the Marshal's line of retreat, on the right bank of the Guadiana, and have completely cut him off. Some little consideration was also necessary as to what the centre corps of the French army might attempt. This corps had posts at the bridges of Almaraz and Archibispo, on the Tagus, and by marching on Merida, where Marshal Beresford would have already crossed, they would have hermetically sealed him up beyond the Guadiana. Thus he and his army

would have been inevitably lost, and this without the power of making an effort. Beresford, in his practised military view, could not have failed to look to and consider this point; it was well worthy of his most serious deliberation; for in a letter of Marshal Soult's to King Joseph, dated March 30, 1811, he actually urges this movement; one which we cannot be surprised that the contracted, or, as yet, unexperienced views of a regimental officer could not comprehend. Col. Napier, indeed, has said that a bridge was to be thrown over the Guadiana at Jerumenha; but he knows very well that there was no means of accomplishing this work. With all the assistance the Marshal's own presence could collect, an effective bridge could not be, and was not, thrown over the Guadiana until the 5th of April; and it was impossible, when he first arrived at Campo Mayor, to ascertain when one could be formed. I strongly suspect that Col. Napier has never been in that part of the country. In detailing the force and position of the enemy, he says, and with truth, that "in making the march by Merida, the Allies would have found plenty of provisions." But at what time does the author state this? Some years afterwards, when the fact has been ascertained; but he forgets that Marshal Beresford, on arriving at Campo Mayor, could not have known by intuition the fact which the historian has become acquainted with by subsequent inquiry.

The Allies had not, for some time, been acting in that part of the country. It was not easy, on such a subject, to obtain true and instantaneous information; and the English commander could only draw his con-

clusions from considering the antecedent circumstances of the country, and the late position of the belligerent armies. From such consideration Lord Beresford had just grounds for supposing that provisions must be scarce, if not entirely exhausted, on both banks of the Guadiana; and the scarcity which existed on the right bank would have conduced to confirm such an opinion. It was many months since the former harvest; and, almost during the whole time, two large contending armies had been operating in, and drawing their resources from, that very territory. Under such circumstances was the commander to conclude, that because a great deal had been taken, a great deal must still be left, and rashly incur the risk of failing to procure supplies for an army, which was already much exhausted? It is certain that, even when the Marshal crossed the Guadiana, on the 6th of the ensuing month, he had no satisfactory account of the state in which he should find the country with respect to provisions. It was an absolute fact, that none were to be procured in the Alemtejo. He was unwilling to occasion any further reduction of the stores in Elvas; and as to the supplies which he was likely to find in Spanish Estremadura, he was driven, in the absence of other intelligence, to depend entirely upon the assurances of one individual, a priest. I recollect Sir William Stewart's coming up to the Marshal, two days after passing the Guadiana, and stating to him that his division had been without bread for one or two days, and were expressing their dissatisfaction. The Marshal told him that none was to be procured in the country they had come from; and they certainly could

not find less in the country to which they were going; he had reason to hope they would be supplied, and desired him to inform his troops that they were in pursuit of the enemy, and in search of a more plentiful country; and that whatever was practicable should be done for them.

I have, I trust, sufficiently exposed the errors into which Col. Napier's prejudice against Lord Beresford has led him, as far as regards the foregoing points. I have shown that the step which, *ex post facto*, he insists upon as the best to be adopted, would have been most unwise: I have shown that the grounds on which he founds his opinion were altogether unsound; that his reasonings were unmilitary and futile; and that the rapid success which he infers as the necessary consequence of his measures, would by no means have been either so quick, so easy, or so certain as the historian has affirmed. After what has been said, it would be absurd to suppose that Marshal Beresford would have found Badajos in the state which the author has described. According to his own account, on all occasions when the Marshal is not concerned, the very contrary might have been anticipated from the acknowledged skill and promptitude of the French commanders in general, and more particularly of General Phillippon. The historian, and perhaps justly, designates this officer as one of the ablest Generals that ever defended a fortress. He at the same time informs us, that "during Beresford's delay he levelled the trenches, restored the glacis, and stopped the breach." If from the day of the surrender to that period, sixteen days, or in one half of the time, knowing, as Col. Napier states, that the

Allied army was approaching, General Phillippon had not done all that, he would not deserve the character which has been attributed to him. Besides, even had he neglected these precautions, he would, as has been already observed, have still had six days' of preparation allowed him before Beresford could have approached. This circumstance the author appears to have entirely overlooked. That Phillippon, with the knowledge that a strong force was advancing against him, should have allowed the provisions, which were abundant for 8000 men, to become insufficient for three, is not credible.

Col. Napier then proceeds to pass the Allied army over the Guadiana at Jerumenha;* and he very clearly points out both the difficulty and uncertainty which was experienced in establishing a bridge there. He describes General La Tour Maubourg as foraging for the supply of provisions for Badajos, and accuses him of imprudence for taking no notice of Beresford's proceedings. It is possible that the French commander may have been in error. It is no part of my business to defend or censure him; but as to the blame which the Colonel endeavours to cast upon Lord Beresford (for neither General acts to his satisfaction), I must beg leave to differ from him altogether. He thinks the Marshal was wrong in not having passed the whole Allied army over the river before a bridge was established.† But the thing was impracticable; for he had not the means: and if it had

* Page 500.

† "Lord Wellington had well weighed all these (Col. Napier's) considerations, and, having done so, he gave the instructions which, with whatever difficulty, were successfully executed. It is obvious that the author had not, or disregarded, correct information of these operations. It may

been practicable, he would not have made an attempt so imprudent and so pregnant of danger to his corps. The Marshal was aware that La Tour Maubourg could be reinforced in a few days, and, with the wretched materials he possessed, was uncertain when a bridge could be constructed, or whether, indeed, one could ever be constructed at all. It is stated, "that a moveable column of 5000 infantry, with guns and cavalry, would have easily cut off the small detachment of the British on the left bank, and thus have completely frustrated the operation." It appears to me that this opinion is wholly erroneous and unfounded. It never could have rested on the author's mind a moment, had he been acquainted with the localities. The British detachment on the left bank of the river were in no danger of being cut off; because the force given to the moveable column of the enemy was its superior in numbers. Two very good and sufficient reasons may be adduced to show the absurdity of such a supposition. *First*, because as the historian has shown, there were boats and pontoons made into rafts, enough to have brought back this small detachment; and, *secondly*, in retiring to the river, they were under the protection of the guns of Jerumenha, a small fortress hanging on a considerable height, that rose perpendicular from the river's edge, and commanded by its fire all the opposite side. Directly under this fortress the bridge was formed, so that no enemy could approach it, even at the distance of field-piece range; and it was perfectly

here be well said to him, as was said by Turenne to some critics, of one of his operations—'Your finger is not a bridge.'"—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

impossible for him to frustrate the operation. Beresford could form his bridge and pass over his troops, in the sight, and in despite of the French. There was no enemy to be apprehended, but the river itself. With an ignorance of facts, which it is altogether singular to meet with on such a subject, as every officer in the Marshal's corps could have corrected him, the historian affirms,* that "when the British were in possession of the left bank, the French General awaking, collected 3000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and four guns, at Olivenza, whence he marched at daylight on the 7th, to oppose a passage which had been completed the day before. He, however, surprised a squadron of the 13th, which was in front, and then came so close up to the main body as to exchange shots;† yet he was permitted to retire unmolested, in the face of more than 20,000 men!!"

There is not, I believe, in the above quotation one single sentence which correctly recounts the facts. On the morning of the 6th, Marshal Beresford was informed by several persons coming from Olivenza, that the enemy, entirely ignorant of the state of affairs near Jerumenha, had assembled 2000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and three guns, at Olivenza, and intended during the night to attack the covering corps on the left bank. The hour when this effort was to be made, was distinctly stated. Most of the cavalry had crossed the river. Sir William Stewart's division was passed over that evening before dark; and Sir Lowry Cole's had begun to move. Though, from the nature of

* Page 500.

† About half-a-score dragoons came as far as a piquet of the 4th Division, were fired on, and beat away.—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

the bridge, it was a tedious operation; yet, before midnight, nearly the whole of this division also had crossed the river; but many guns, stores, &c. were still remaining on the right bank. The Marshal, before sunset, communicated to the principal officers the intended attack of the enemy; and having fixed Gen. Stewart's division in its position, he marked out that which Gen. Cole's was to take up as it arrived. The squadron of the 13th, he had ordered to be withdrawn before dark, and to be placed in the rear of Gen. Stewart's division. From some mistake or other, which occurred in giving or carrying M. Gen. Long's orders, this movement was not executed. At the hour which was intimated, somewhere about midnight, the enemy made their attack; but after the capture of the squadron of the 13th Dragoons, on approaching our line, and finding the troops on the alert, they retired. The night was particularly dark, so dark that even during the few, perhaps a dozen, shots that were fired, the enemy neither was, nor could be seen. I am a plain man; I don't deal in rhetorical exaggerations; I speak literally. The attacking body was not seen dimly, or indistinctly; but it was absolutely not seen at all. Col. Napier's statement is thus contradicted in every particular. The Allies had *not* completed the passage; the enemy's departure from Olivenza was *not* at daylight; and he did not retire, as Col. Napier states, unmolested, "*in the face,*" that is, *in the view,* of the Allied army. It would have taken a clearer sighted man than the author to have pursued where neither the road nor the enemy could be perceived. If Col. Napier was a man of experience, even if he was qualified to judge

in great military operations, is it fair and honourable, upon such imperfect intelligence as he seems to possess, and with such implicit confidence in the infallibility of his own judgment, to utter his dictatorial censure on the measures and talents of officers of the highest rank and reputation? What has Col. Napier achieved? In what country has he signalized himself? What honours has he gained? What great exploits has he performed—which may authorize him in thus lording it over the reputations of the most experienced and veteran commanders, and cavilling at their operations, and withering their hard-earned laurels by the evil touch of his supercilious criticism? But this author has more to answer for than mere inadvertency. He clearly places the attack of the enemy *in the day time.* Olivenza is a long hour's march from the position which was then held by the Allied troops. The attack is consequently represented as occurring after sunrise on the 7th, with the apparent object of introducing the assertion, that this small corps was allowed to retire, while Marshal Beresford, with 20,000 men, stood by, the quiet and unresisting witnesses of their proceedings. The historian is again culpable for, to say the least of it, very great inattention. In the Duke of Wellington's published despatch, it is stated, "I have the honour to enclose the report of Marshal Sir William Beresford, on the surprise of a squadron of the 13th Light Dragoons on the night of the 6th instant." Now, does Col. Napier imagine that the *night* of the 6th instant, meant *after sunrise* on the morning of the 7th?

In the following page,* the author speaks of a

* Page 501.

jealousy between Castanos and Blake, who some time after joined Beresford, and of some difficulty about which of the three was to command after the junction of the Allied with the Spanish corps. He concludes by saying, "Thus the youngest officer commanded in chief." Another error: at the time, Blake was but a Lieut.-General, whilst Beresford had been two years a Marshal. In what manner, therefore, Blake was senior and superior in rank to Beresford rests for Col. Napier to explain. If that gentleman had taken the trouble of looking into any Spanish almanack, he would have seen that Blake was not made a Captain-General (which is in Spain the rank equal to Marshal,) till after the battle of Albuera; and that, even in the Spanish army, Beresford's rank, as Captain-General, is senior to his.

The account, given in the same page,* of Beresford's having summoned Olivenza, apparently expecting no defence, and of the army's encamping round the place, on the Governor's having rejected the summons, is likewise incorrect.† The army did not halt there. Sir L. Cole with his division alone remained behind. The author may inform himself of this fact by consulting the Duke of Wellington's, and Sir L. Cole's despatches on Olivenza.

I must now quote, and observe upon, a little tirade which the author has delivered in his usual candid and impartial manner. Speaking of the operations which had taken place in Estremadura after crossing

* Page 501.

† "The army did not encamp there for the siege of Olivenza, but for want of bread, and to await the arrival of some from Elvas."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

the Guadiana, he tells us,* that "while they were going on, Lord Wellington arrived at Elvas, where Beresford, after drawing his infantry nearer to Badajoz, went to meet him. The presence of the General-in-chief was very agreeable to the troops;† they had seen with surprise great masses put in motion without any adequate results, and thought the operations had been slow without being prudent. The whole army was over the Guadiana on the 7th, and, including the Spaniards‡ from Montego, Beresford at least commanded 25,000 men, whereas La Tour Maubourg never had more than 10,000, many of whom were dispersed far and wide; yet the French General had maintained himself in Estremadura for ten days; and during this time, no corps being employed to constrain the garrison of Badajoz, the governor continued to bring in timber, and other materials for the defence, at his pleasure." First, it is not a fact that the whole army had passed the Guadiana on the 7th: they were not across it till the evening of the 8th, and could not then move till the 9th. Thus two of our author's ten days are disposed of. "The troops," he tells us, "had seen with surprise, &c. &c." This is a gratuitous and groundless supposition of the Colonel. The troops neither did nor could have any sympathy in the surprise, and the thoughts that he ascribes to them. His own account establishes, that there could have

* Page 503.

† "The author, it would seem, writes a good deal from the *tales* of the period. The troops could be but bad judges of motives, circumstances, or obstacles."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

‡ "He had no Spaniards; but two four-pounder guns."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

been no reason for them. It was only on the 9th, that the army was in readiness to move from the Guadiana. On the same day, Sir Lowry Cole's division sat down before Olivenza. Marshal Beresford, with the remainder of his troops, proceeded to clear Estremadura. He rescued Balasteros, who had suffered defeat and was pursued by Marensin; and but for the treachery of an Alcalde, he would entirely have destroyed Marensin and his corps. The Marshal drove La Tour Maubourg into the Morena, and defeated and cut to pieces two regiments of French cavalry, not at Usagre, as misstated by the author, but at Los Santos. Mortier certainly fed his troops in the usual course of things till the Marshal could reach him and drive him out. This occurred in ten days. Had he marched by Merida, he could not have done it sooner, and have shut in Badajos. In the meantime, it is true, as has been said, that Mortier fed his troops; but still I am at a loss to discover the evil which is complained of. It does not appear that that occasioned any scarcity, or put Beresford to any difficulty on the score of provisions; and even if it had, I do not comprehend how it could have been prevented. The author very gratuitously augments the Marshal's force to 25,000 men, by the junction of a Spanish corps from Montego. No such force ever joined the Marshal, or was under his command. Until the date of meeting Lord Wellington at Elvas, there were no Spanish troops attached to his army. In the name of the troops the author says, "they had seen great masses put in motion without any adequate results." Why, he has just declared, as stated above, that La Tour Maubourg

and Marensin had retired beyond the reach of Lord Beresford; and to compel them to retire, if he could not come up with and defeat them, was the very result anticipated by his movements. Doubtless the Marshal is highly blameable that the enemy would not wait for his approach. It is true, the troops never saw any of these corps, except the two cavalry regiments which were cut to pieces; but they could not fail knowing as much respecting them as is generally known by troops under similar circumstances, which seldom amounts to more than a vague and undefined notion, that they are in pursuit of the enemy, or some other reported object. The fact is, that the Marshal was carrying on these operations, as necessary in themselves, and to act as was most useful whilst the stores and materials for the siege of Badajos were preparing. By advancing on the 9th and 10th to Valverde and Albuera, and possessing Talavera Real, he cut off all communication between the French in the field and the garrison; but being minus the division of Sir L. Cole, he did not judge it wise or expedient to diminish his corps any further whilst Mortier and Marensin were in his front. It is true, that during these few days the Governor of Badajos got some wood into the place. This was, no doubt, an advantage; but the fortress was already in a state perfectly defensible, and with regard to stores and provisions, was in that state even when the Allied troops arrived at Campo Mayor. If the Marshal, for the purpose of investing Badajos more closely, had weakened his force to the extent of 3000 or 4000 men; and if Mortier had assembled his corps, and attacked, or obliged him to retire,

what then would this candid historian have said of Beresford's subjecting himself to such a reverse, merely for the sake of preventing the conveyance of a little wood into Badajos? That this matter may be better understood, I think it right to lay before the reader Lord Wellington's despatch on the transactions, taken from the official publication in the volume of Bulletins of the campaign of 1811, which certainly neither shows surprise nor dissatisfaction at what Marshal Beresford had done. On the contrary, though the General-in-chief had himself just reconnoitred the place, on account of the bridge at Jerumenha having been carried away, he directs that the blockade should be continued, but that the operations of the siege should be delayed; and, as Lord Beresford had by this time captured Olivenza, and disembarrassed himself of the enemy as a neighbour in the field, he was able more effectually to blockade the place; especially as he had now acquired a more intimate knowledge of the posture of affairs to the south, and of the state and positions of the Spanish troops.

"*Portalegre, 25th April*, 1811.

"I have the honour to inform you, that since I addressed you, I have been in Estremadura, from whence I am now on my return to the troops stationed between the Agueda and the Coa.

"I have the honour to enclose the report of Marshal Sir William Beresford, on the surprise of a squadron of the 13th Light Dragoons on the night of the 6th instant, together with a return of the loss upon that occasion.

"Sir William Beresford employed the 4th division,

under the command of the Hon. Major-General Cole, in the attack on Olivenza, which place surrendered at discretion on the 15th instant. I have the honour to enclose the Hon. Major-General Cole's report to Sir William Beresford, and returns of ordnance, arms, &c., and prisoners taken in the place.

"As Sir William Beresford deemed it advisable to oblige the enemy to retire from the province of Estremadura entirely, before he should commence his operations against Badajoz, he moved forward with this view, while Major-General the Hon. G. L. Cole was engaged in the attack upon Olivenza, as well as to give support and protection to Gen. Ballasteros's division of Spanish troops, which had been obliged to retire from Freyenal successively upon Xeres de los Cuballeros and Salvatierra, on the 13th and 14th instant, by a division of French troops under the command of Gen. Maransin.

"The Marshal marched on the 15th to Santa Martha, and on the 16th to Los Santos, where the British and Portuguese cavalry fell upon a body of the enemy's cavalry, and took 160 prisoners, and killed and wounded a great many. The cavalry conducted themselves with the greatest steadiness and good order.

"The enemy having retired to Guadalcanal, and the corps under Gen. Maransin having retired through the Sierra, the troops were put in motion to return to the northward, and to take their stations for the operations of the siege of Badajoz, and the Marshal met me at Elvas on the 21st. We reconnoitred Badajoz on the 22d, escorted by two light

battalions of the King's German Legion, and two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry.

"They brought three battalions out of the town, which skirmished with our troops; but I have not yet received the returns of our loss upon the occasion.

"As the preparations for the siege are nearly completed, the place would by this time have been regularly invested, only that on the night of the 23d, the floods in the Guadiana carried away the bridge, which Sir William Beresford had, with great difficulty, constructed under Jerumenha; and the river was no longer fordable any where. Under these circumstances, I yesterday desired him to delay the operations of the siege till he should have been able to re-establish his bridge, or until the Guadiana should again become fordable, still keeping Badajoz blockaded as closely as might be in his power."

I now reach the last subject of Col. Napier's injurious misrepresentations respecting Lord Beresford. The origin of those misrepresentations appears to be different at different times. The errors to which I object, may, in many instances, be traced to the author's want of full and accurate information with regard to the localities, and the circumstances under which the Marshal's operations were carried on; they may, in many other instances, be traced to the really false information which he had received and written from, without taking the trouble of ascertaining its truth from those who might have enlightened him on the subject; they may also, in more instances than one, be traced to the prejudice which he appears to have imbibed against the

Marshal, to the extreme negligence with which he puts together the materials of his work, and to that want of recollection which makes him not unfrequently forget, in one part of his narrative, the very facts which he has himself related in another; and, finally, these errors may be traced, in countless instances, to the author's extreme deficiency in military knowledge and experience. He says,* "On the 15th, Lord Wellington, hearing that Soult, although hitherto reported by Beresford to be entirely on the defensive, was actually marching into Estremadura, he set out himself for that province." There never was a more uncandid interpretation, or I might rather say a more false interpretation, given of any passage, than the above lines afford of the extract upon which they are grounded, and which is printed in the author's Appendix. In Lord Wellington's despatch of the 22d of May, which is here alluded to, there is no indication of what Marshal Beresford's opinions as to Soult's movements might happen to be. Nay, it might perhaps have been inferred from the Marshal's expressions, that he had all along been of a different opinion; for he says, "Soult was moving into Estremadura, notwithstanding the reports that had previously been received." What, therefore, the Marshal is here speaking of are the reports that he had received, and not the views which he himself entertained. But this subject will be further discussed on another occasion, when the author still more directly imputes to him that erroneous opinion. As far as regards the military talents and conduct of the Marshal, it

* Page 523

cannot signify, indeed, which way his opinion inclined. A General, at any given moment, may be induced by circumstances to suppose that his enemy will adopt a certain line of conduct, and be deceived in his supposition, without incurring any imputation derogatory to his abilities. The point, and the only point, that could implicate the talents of a commander would be his having been so blindly persuaded, that his opponent would adopt one of two measures, as to neglect taking any precautions against the other. No such case as this ever occurred with Marshal Beresford. We defy Col. Napier to name one. The Marshal, waiting for the waters of the Guadiana to subside, or for the bridge to be restored, put his troops into cantonments; but, whilst he rested and refreshed his men, the enemy was not allowed to imagine himself forgotten, or presume that he might refresh himself in a season of quiet and repose. Col. Colborne was despatched still further to clear Estremadura. The author then very exactly describes the result, and pays a just tribute to Col. Colborne. Thus a small portion of Lord Beresford's corps now compelled large masses of the enemy to retire before very slender numbers, and, says Napier, "he (Colborne) obliged the French troops to quit Fuente, Ovejuna, La Granja, Azuaga, and most of the other frontier towns; and La Tour Maubourg, imagining a great force at hand, abandoned Guadalcanal, and fell back to Constantino;"* thus giving up all Estrema-

* Page 523.—"No man in the army questions Col. Colborne's eminent talents and endowments; but *these marches were all indicated with relation to their object in Marshal Beresford's instructions to him.*"—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

dura. But not one word do we hear of Beresford in all this. Does the historian suppose, that a Colonel could thus carry off a brigade without orders or instructions from his chief, on a sudden fancy of his own, and that he should, by the merest possible stroke of good fortune, fall in with another corps, which would consent, without any directions, to join company in their Quixotic excursion? If the plan and the instructions were good, the merit is Lord Beresford's:* if they were well executed, the merit is Col. Colborne's: but here, again, merit is due to the Commander-in-chief for having exercised so sound a discretion in the application of his means to his end, and selected an officer so admirably adapted to the service that was required.

FIRST SIEGE OF BADAJOZ.

I shall observe very shortly on a few slight errors in the author's account of this first investment. They must have been the result of inadvertency. He says:† "The 5th of May, Gen. William Stewart invested Badajoz on the left bank of the Guadiana." The date is wrong; that circumstance occurred on the 4th of May. It is also stated in the account of the investment of Fort St. Christoval, by Major-Gen. Lumley on the 8th, that "the troops did not arrive simultaneously." The author has mistaken their not

* "There was only one part of Col. Colborne's tour, his attempt to surprise the fortified post of Benelcazar, which was not in his instructions; and this, perhaps, had better been left out of his operations, as it made his return to the army several days later than it would otherwise have been. This, indeed, proved of no consequence, for he regained his division at Valverde on the 14th of May."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

† Page 524.

arriving at the time directed by the Marshal at their rendezvous, whence to march against St. Christoval, for their not arriving simultaneously at the latter place. The former they did not; but the latter they did. Lord Beresford's published letter says :—"By some accident to the bearer of the order to Brigadier-Gen. Kemmis, that officer did not arrive at his post till nine o'clock (three was the hour ordered). The Hon. Major-Gen. Lumley, on the approach of the light companies of the brigade, advancing towards the town with the forces he brought from Elvas, the garrison made a sortie, but was immediately driven back by the Grenadiers, 17th Portuguese regiment." It is thus clear that the junction was formed; and the British brigade became the reserve: its advance being with Gen. Lumley, an officer not likely to mistake, or to act contrary to his instructions.

"In double operations," says the author,* "whether of the field, or of siege, it is essential to move with exact concert; lest the enemy should crush each in detail; yet neither in the investment nor in the attack was this maxim regarded."† I, at once, as a military man, deny the author's premises. His maxim is not of universal authority. The fitness, or unfitness, of its application must depend, according to the circumstances of the case, and the object, and the instructions of the General. But with regard to the investment in question, his observations have no propriety or application whatever. The fortress of

* Page 526.

† The place was attacked, in every point and detail, in precise conformity with Lord Wellington's instructions of the 23d of April, 1811, after a personal reconnoisance made on the 22d; and in communication with Colonel Fletcher, the chief engineer.—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

Badajos was invested; first, on the left bank, where, indeed, the whole town is built, by that larger portion of Marshal Beresford's corps, which had nothing to fear from the garrison; and secondly, on the right bank, by that smaller force under Gen. Lumley, which, if brought up alone, might have had cause of apprehension, and which was kept at a distance, and beyond the reach of any sally from the fortress, till the main body of the army on the left bank had thoroughly invested the place, and rendered it dangerous for the garrison to detach any considerable force against them. Lumley's corps was then ordered up; and in opposition to Col. Napier's opinion, I maintain that this arrangement was scientific; that it was according to the best practice; and that no more risk was incurred of each or either corps being crushed in detail, than if the two had been brought up at the same moment. I aver, moreover, that the smaller corps, the only one liable to attack, was in less danger than if brought up simultaneously with the larger. The Marshal was fully able to reconoitre and arrange for the security of the small corps, which, indeed, was now protected by the established presence of the larger force before the principal fortress. As to the operations of Capt. Squires, whom we again encounter combating against Lord Beresford as the author's coadjutor, it will be seen that the chief-engineer of the Allied army was now present, and that the Marshal deferred, in a considerable degree, if not altogether, to his opinion on all matters connected with the siege; of which, in fact, the general outlines had been arranged on an occasion previously referred to. Col. Napier, however, may be surprised

to hear that few officers of the Marshal's rank, not professedly engineers, could so well judge on such a subject. He had received the latter part of his education at the great military school of Strasburg; where, in addition to the theory of fortification and gunnery, he had the advantage of witnessing the experimental illustration of the theory of war, in the great reviews which were then frequent in that town, and during which, every part of the military art was practised. But these are matters of which the historian is, perhaps, ignorant.—At this distance of time, it might not be very easy even for the Marshal to recollect the reasons which induced him, or Col. Fletcher, to commence the siege by opening batteries so near against St. Christoval; but there are several which might suggest themselves to the mind of any military reader. I remember the ground pretty well; and I know that, from its formation, the place, at the distance of 400 yards, where the batteries were formed by Captain Squires, could be approached under cover. On this point, I speak positively, as I accompanied the Marshal into the batteries on the 11th, the day alluded to by the historian. The moon, at the time, was at the full; but this would have been a reason for delaying the operations for another week, as far as the exposure from moonlight would have affected the case. It is said that Capt. Squires was ill provided with tools; his tools were, certainly, not of the most perfect description; but again, if the Marshal had waited till he was provided with better, the siege would never have commenced at all, as they must have been sent for from England. The most conclusive and readiest answer, however,

which I can offer Col. Napier, is an extract from the Marshal's despatch upon these points, sent to Lord Wellington, as published in the bulletins, campaign 1811. That there may be no suspicion of partial quotation, though some part might be omitted, it shall be given entire :—

"*Albuera, May* 16, 1811.

"In conformity to your Lordship's instructions given to me on the 24th ultimo., in consequence of the then state of the weather, and our means of communication across the Guadiana having been destroyed by the sudden flooding of that river, and leaving my cavalry in Zafra, Los Santos, and Villa Franca, I placed the infantry with its head at Almedralejo, Azuechal, and Villa Alba, where were the divisions of Major-Gen. the Hon. William Stewart, and Major-Gen. Hamilton, and the Hon. Major-Gen. Cole's division, with Brigadier-Gen. Madden's brigade of cavalry in Merida, the infantry brigade of it commanded by Brigadier-Gen. Kemmis, and that was intended for the attack of Fort St. Christoval, at Montego, and the light brigade German legion under Major-Gen. Baron Alten at Talavera Real, leaving the light battalion L. L. legion in Olivenza, during the period of waiting the fall of the water of the Guadiana, and the re-establishment of our bridge. It being of considerable importance to push the enemy from us as far as possible during the siege, as he had, on our obliging him to retire from Llerena to Guadalcanal, held the latter place, I directed a small column of two thousand men, composed of the first brigade, 2nd division, under the command

of Lieut.-Col. Colborne, with two squadrons of cavalry, and two Spanish four-pounders, to proceed from Almedralejo, by Ribera and Manquilla, to Azuaga, to threaten his right; sending, at the same time, four squadrons of cavalry from Brigadier-Gen. Long, at Villa Franca, to Llerena, to support the Count de Penne Villamur, who was then with the Spanish cavalry of General Castana's corps, to make him fear an attack in front; and Gen. Ballasteros went from Monasterio to threaten his left. These manœuvres had the desired effect; as soon as the enemy saw the advance of Lieut.-Col. Colborne near Azuaga, where he had five hundred infantry, and three hundred cavalry, he abandoned precipitately the place, and retired to Guadalcanal, which place General La Tour Maubourg, with the 5th corps, quitted in two hours after the arrival of his detachment, and, at eleven o'clock at night, retired near to Constantino. Lieut.-Col. Colborne performed this service in a most judicious and handsome manner.

"3d. The weather having been some time fine, and the waters of the Guadiana having subsided, and our preparations having, by Lieut.-Col. Fletcher's activity, been nearly completed for the siege of Badajoz; on the 3d of May, I sent three brigades of infantry, a brigade of six-pounders, and two squadrons of cavalry, under the orders of Major-Cen. the Hon. William Stewart, to invest more closely Badajoz on the south of the river, which he performed with his usual zeal and attention on the 4th. On the 6th instant, I directed the march of the remaining divisions on Badajoz, one by Albuera, the other by Talavera, leaving the cavalry as before placed. On

the 7th, I came before Badajoz with three divisions. General Castanos furnished also, to co-operate in the siege, two thousand men, under the command of Brigadier Don Carlos D'Espagne. On the 8th, I directed the brigade of Brigadier-Gen. Kemmis, which had been previously placed on the Chebora, to proceed to the Torre of St. Ingracia, about two miles from Badajoz, on the Campo Mayor road, and to be joined there by the 17th Portuguese regiment, two squadrons of cavalry, and four six-pounders from Elvas, the force to meet at three o'clock in the morning, and the whole to be placed under the orders of the Hon. Major-Gen. William Lumley, to invest the north side. By some accident to the bearer of the orders to Brigadier-Gen. Kemmis, the officer did not arrive at his post, till nine o'clock; the Hon. Major-Gen. Lumley, on the approach of the light companies of the brigade, advancing towards the town with the force he brought from Elvas, the garrison made a sortie, but was immediately driven back, and the Grenadiers of the 17th regiment, particularly distinguishing themselves by charging the enemy, headed by Col. Turner; the detachment suffered the loss as per return No. 1.

"4th. On the 8th, Lieut.-Col. Fletcher to protect the further approaches constructed batteries against the Pardalleiras and Piquerino, on the heights commanding them, though at a considerable distance; and Captain Squires, whom the Lieut.-Col. had sent to superintend the works intended to be erected against St. Christoval, began his operations on the 8th. The breaking ground on that side immediately caused great jealousy to the enemy, and he opposed

it by a most heavy fire, of shot and shell; and on the morning of the 10th, he made a sortie against the battery constructing, with about twelve hundred men, being within five hundred yards of the place. He soon reached the battery, and it having, of the covering party allotted to it only one light company in it, the enemy got possession of it, but had it not for two minutes, as the whole of the covering party, which was close to the battery on the slope of the hill, immediately seized their arms, and drove the enemy back with considerable loss. But I regret to say, ours on this occasion must have been considerably greater, from our troops having exposed themselves to the shot and shell of the town and fort of St. Christoval, and the musquetry from this latter.

"5th. I annex the return of our loss on this day, and in it I have to lament being deprived of the services of Col. Turner, who, in the very short time he had been in the Portuguese service, had given me the greatest satisfaction, and in these two days the most conspicuous proofs of his gallantry.

"6th. I annex the returns of our further loss of men, on the respective days that our operations against Badajoz continued, and the Hon. Major-Gen. Lumley's reports on the circumstances and consequences of the enemy's sorties.

"7th. On the 12th, I received information from Gen. Blake, that Marshal Soult had left Seville on the 10th, and with the avowed intention of coming to Badajoz. His force stated to be fifteen thousand men, and Gen. La Tour Maubourg had already again moved upon, and occupied Guadalcanal and Llerena, from which places the Count de Penne

Villemur had been obliged to retire. As Gen. Blake had come down to Frejenal, and Gen. Ballasteros from Monasterio had pushed his advance within a league of Seville, I could not judge if this advance of Marshal Soult was merely to oblige these Generals to retire, and leave him undisturbed in Seville, or really, as it was given out to be, against me, and with the object of raising the siege of Badajoz, and therefore continued my operations against the place until the further advance of Soult should more clearly determine this point; but in the middle of the night I received information, from Gen. Blake and other quarters, of the rapid advance of Marshal Soult, which left no doubt as to his intentions. I immediately sent to suspend operations against Badajoz, and to commence the removal of our guns and stores to Elvas. By the great exertions of Lieut.-Col. Fletcher, of the Royal Engineers, and Major Dixon, of the Artillery, every thing was removed on the evening of the 15th. To Lieut.-Gen. Leite's (the Governor of the province of Alemtejo) zeal and unwearied activity, in whatever regards the service and welfare of his country, it is but just to say, we are, on all occasions, much indebted, and particularly on this, in the getting together the transports necessary to us, and in furnishing and forwarding whatever else could be useful. I seize with pleasure this opportunity of giving to Gen. Leite that praise which he has ever so fully merited.

"8th. I had been obliged, to cover the removal of stores, &c., to leave the division of Major-Gen. the Hon. G. L. Cole before Badajoz. Major-Gen. Cole marched from before Badajoz to join the army

here at two o'clock in the morning of the 16th, and arrived about half an hour before the enemy made his attack. I have, however, the satisfaction to inform your Lordship, that the enemy cannot boast of having got a particle of our stores; they were all safely lodged in Elvas; and, with the exception of Brigadier-Gen. Kemmis's brigade, which was on the north side of the Guadiana, our troops were all united on the morning of the 16th, to meet the attack, and oppose the march of Marshal Soult."

It will be seen from the above, that, when Capt. Squires was directed by Col. Fletcher to begin his works on the right bank, the Colonel actually began his the very same night on the left bank. In thus proceeding, there appears nothing of that want of concert in operation which is condemned by the author. That those on the left bank were more distant than those on the right, originated in the different formation of the ground; the one giving cover to a nearer approach than the other: but it is manifest that both were to a great degree undertaken with the view of deceiving the enemy, and withdrawing his attention from the point at which the real attack was to be made. The loss of men, until the sortie on the 10th, was very trifling; and that which was then sustained is to be ascribed to the rash impetuosity which led the troops to advance too far against the enemy, an event of only too common occurrence; but for which no one but Col. Napier, as far as I have read or heard, ever dreamt of making an *absent* Commander-in-chief responsible.

The Marshal himself was with Capt. Squires in the batteries on the 11th. It was there that the

Captain, as he says, remonstrated against the further continuance of the attack. The fire of the enemy was then at its height. Lord Beresford must, therefore, have had a pretty good knowledge of its effects, and have seen many and substantial reasons for not directing the fire of the battery to cease. The fact is, it was combined with other considerations. Lord Beresford appears very properly to have guarded the same silence to Capt. Squires on this occasion, as Lord Wellington did on a former one; and, as an officer, the historian ought to feel that, though the Marshal had approved any remarks or suggestions offered by Capt. Squires, he could only give his orders through Col. Fletcher, the head of that department. The author has twice introduced Capt. Squires to the notice of the reader, and, to my mind, not in a very friendly or judicious manner. He had indeed lavished upon him a world of commendation, which is more than nullified by the ridiculous part which he represents him as performing. Capt. Squires, in the pages of Col. Napier, appears as little better than a vain, officious, pragmatical coxcomb. This, in reality, was not at all his character. He was a person by no means deficient in ability, and a very gallant and zealous officer. Like too many others of the same rank and position with himself, he occasionally thought fit to discuss and decide upon the general operations of the army, when he had no correct information to guide him, and was led away by the *ignis fatuus* of his own conjectures and surmises. His friend, the historian, to prove the great talents of this officer, has brought forward some of his plans for the attack and destruction of

Massena's army, when in the position at Santarem and its vicinity. To any one acquainted with the ground, and the positions, and the circumstances of the time, these plans are actually absurd: but the most extraordinary thing is, that Col. Napier, after adducing them as evidences of Squires' genius, takes the trouble to point out their impracticability, as if he had only adduced them for the purpose of refuting them, and showing that, though the Captain was great, the Colonel is still greater.

SOULT'S SECOND EXPEDITION TO ESTREMADURA.

THE author's introduction of this part is merely a repetition of his former opinions, which have, I trust, been sufficiently exposed. He proceeds to say ;* that Soult, by the erection of new works, and the continuance of such as had been suspended at Seville and other places, "deceived Beresford, who believed that, far from thinking of relieving Badajoz, he was trembling for his own province."† I take upon myself to say that nothing can be more entirely unfounded than the whole of the above passage. No evidence is produced in its support, except an extract from a despatch of Lord Beresford's, informing Lord Wellington of the reports which he had received; and the author might just as well accuse Lord Wellington of believing them, because he trans-

* Page 527.

† "No such thing. Beresford always thought his coming possible, if not very probable, and when he did come he was ready and not surprised." *MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

mitted the Marshal's reports of them to England, as assume that Lord Beresford believed them, because he had transmitted them to the Commander-in-chief. But, as I have already said, it is perfectly immaterial what the Marshal's opinion might happen to have been. I have not the least objection, for the sake of the argument, to grant that he believed Soult had no intention of marching to the relief of Badajos; and, having yielded this point, I come at once to the only question which the public and the military reader have to decide upon, and which is, whether the Marshal's conduct was such as a great officer would have pursued under his circumstances, and with his objects in view?

It will, I apprehend, be shown that it was; and, in establishing this position, I shall appeal to no other evidence than that which is afforded me by Col. Napier's own relation of facts. The materials contained in his own work furnish me with all the proofs I require in controverting and oversetting the conclusions he has drawn. Marshal Beresford was detached into Alemtejo and Spanish Estremadura to save, or recapture, Campo Mayor, Olivenza, and Badajoz. He had already succeeded as to two of these fortresses, and was prosecuting the operations necessary to fulfil his instructions respecting the third. For this object he had cleared Estremadura of the enemy. But when he was engaged in this enterprise, the Marshal, as well as Lord Wellington under whose command he acted, was perfectly aware that Soult, with a very numerous and efficient force, was at Seville. This was sufficient to induce any officer, even of the very meanest capacity, to be upon

his guard; and Col. Napier has shown that Marshal Beresford was not only perfectly on his guard, but that he had calculated Soult's power and means of attacking him as to the time most accurately, and also the preparation which it was necessary for him to make. When Soult arrived, the Marshal was ready to meet him, and that without any kind of loss, and even without the possibility of being accused of desisting unnecessarily from the enterprise immediately in hand. We seldom, I think, read in history of any military operation more skilfully and judiciously combined for the furtherance of all its objects, than that which Col. Napier has related of the prosecution of the siege of Badajoz, to the last moment of propriety, the then raising it, and meeting and fighting Marshal Soult at Albuera. With regard to the latter part of the business, the author says,* "Beresford, as I have before said, remained in a state of uncertainty until the night of the 12th, when he commenced raising the siege, contrary to the earnest representations of the engineers, who promised to put him in possession of the place in three days, if he would persevere. This promise was ill founded; and, if it had been otherwise, Soult would have surprised him in his trenches, and his arrangements for carrying off the stores were admiably executed." Might not the author have said "*made* and executed?" When the author affirms that "Beresford remained in a state of ignorance of Soult's intention until the 12th," nothing can be more correct, as the Marshal does not pretend to the possession of that intuitive knowledge which is

* Page 528.

sometimes assumed by our author, and is not capable of reading the thoughts of individuals whom he never saw or conversed with. On this occasion, Lord Beresford acted upon information drawn from those sources of intelligence on which commanders are in the habit of depending. But if the author means to insinuate, as he elsewhere does, an accusation against the Marshal, and assert that this ignorance of Soult's movement originated in an excess of credulity, and induced an injurious neglect, nothing can be more wholly erroneous and ungrounded. Col. Napier's own relation fully acquits him of all want of precaution. Here the author does him justice; but fort he more complete satisfaction of the reader, I beg to refer him to the seventh paragraph of Marshal Beresford's despatch to Lord Wellington, dated Albuera, May 16, 1811, and which has already been transcribed at length in the former part of this pamphlet. It may, at once, be seen from the tone of this letter, that the movement of the French was not a matter of surprise to the Marshal; and, indeed, that it was not unexpected by him. The same conclusion may be inferred from his operations on receiving the intelligence of Soult's advance. He reasoned well upon the subject; and his movements were certainly not those of a person taken by surprise. He did not show any doubt or hesitation with regard to his own powers and means; and he would not be forced to forego his object by a mere demonstration of the enemy. Confident that he possessed the means of receiving the most prompt and certain information, he firmly continued his operations against Badajos,

until he was satisfied, by the further advance of Soult, that his object could no longer be doubted. It should be remembered, that the Marshal's information of Soult's movements did not reach him from Gen. Blake alone, but from other safe and ready channels, which he had established in the neighbourhood of the enemy. What then are we to say to Col. Napier's imputation against Lord Beresford's "not believing in Soult's coming to the relief of Badajoz"—"of his thinking that he was trembling for his own safety, &c.?" Every reader will agree with me in replying, that if Marshal Beresford really did believe, as this magical diviner of his thoughts decides, no man was less thrown off his guard by what must have appeared to him as the enemy's most probable line of conduct; and that, however strong his contrary belief might have been, he could not have exhibited more suspicion of the enemy's intentions, or more alertness in opposing his motions. I cannot believe that the nation or posterity will often call the commander to account for his belief, whose deeds are like those of Marshal Beresford. The historian, without any authority whatever, first takes upon himself to state what Lord Beresford thought and believed; and then endeavours to tarnish his military judgment by insinuating that his thoughts and belief were wrong, though he admits that his acts and conduct were right. I leave it to the justice of the reader to sentence this dealing as it deserves.

The author continues to observe,* "that Beresford held a conference with the Spanish generals, at

* Page 529.

Valverde, on the 13th, and it was agreed to receive battle at Albuera." It was agreed to take up a position at Albuera; but that the enemy would there give battle, Lord Beresford was at least very uncertain. Had Col. Napier been aware of this fact, it would, perhaps, have afforded him a hint on which to fabricate another charge against the commander of the Allied forces. The author then proceeds to lay down the relative positions of the Allies at this time, and the arrangements that were agreed upon respecting their disposal at Albuera. This position Col. Napier describes* as a "ridge about four miles long, having Aroya Val de Sevilla in rear, and the Albuera river in front. The right of the army was prolonged towards Almendral, the left towards Badajoz, and the ascent from the river was easy, the ground being in all parts practicable for calvary and artillery. Somewhat in advance of the centre, were the bridge and the village of Albuera; the former commanded by a battery, the latter occupied by Alten's brigade. The second division, under Gen. William Stewart, was drawn up in one line, the right on a commanding hill, over which the Valverde road passed; the left on the road of Badajoz, beyond which the order of battle was continued in two lines, by the Portuguese troops under Gen. Hamilton and Col. Collins. The right of the position, which was stronger, and higher, and broader than any other part, was left for Blake's army, because Beresford, thinking the hill on the Valverde road to be the key of the position, as protecting his only line of retreat, was desirous to secure it with his best troops."

* Page 530.

Such is the author's account of the ground of Albuera, and of the position held by the troops on the 15th instant. As it is indispensable that the reader should have a true view of these particulars, to enable him to comprehend the details which follow, I shall now lay before him another outline of them, which will be found to differ very considerably from that of the historian, who, being personally ignorant on the subject, has been obliged to depend on others for his information, and has been somewhat unfortunate in the choice of his informants.

Between two and four o'clock in the afternoon of the 15th, Gen. Sir William Stewart's division arrived at Albuera, not long preceding the unexpected appearance of Major-Gen. Long, with the cavalry from Santa Martha. The whole of the position of Albuera was a ridge about three miles long, having the Aroya Val de Sevilla in the rear. This at any time is but a trifling stream of water. It has its source not a mile distant from the position; and, except in rainy whether, is perfectly dry. There was, I believe, no water there at the time; and at all seasons any impediment it might occasion, would be found in the depth of the channel which the stream has worn in that soft ground, rather than in the stream itself. The Albuera, a considerable rivulet, is in front. From the top of the ridge the descent to the river, though about half a mile distant from the rear of the village, is easy, and quite practicable for any army. The rear of the position was otherwise; its descent was abrupt and steep, and only practicable for infantry; but towards the left of the line, this abruptness wore by degrees away, till the ground

came on a level with the ridge. The whole, half a league lower, gradually declined into the plain, that extends to Talavera, and through which the Albuera continues its course till it falls into the Guadiana. On the extreme right of the position, where this ridge ends, it is very steep. This part afterwards became the real front. It curved away from the opposite hills, which were afterwards occupied by the enemy and were beyond the right of the first position, in the shape of the blade of a scimitar, till the point approached a more marked round hill. This hill, being considerably thrown back on the left of the new line and advanced in front of the right of the original one, was the nearest point of both positions to the Albuera stream, except that at the village; but it was considerably lower than the ridge itself. This butt of the original position, as has been observed, became finally the battle ground. It was separated from the remainder of this chain of heights by a deepish valley of about four or five hundred yards in breadth. Beyond this, the hills again began to rise, and continued to ascend without interruption to the very high lands about and above Almandral. The whole of this ridge is, in fact, a tongue projecting from the latter heights, and ending, as I have described, in the plain somewhat above two miles below the left of the position. The only decided separation in this ridge is that near which the right of the Allies was posted. About the centre of the original position arose a sort of conical hill, which forms the most elevated point of the ridge. The road from the south to Valverde and Olivenza lies near this hill to the right, and passing through

the village of Albuera, crosses the ridge at right angles. At some distance on its left, but from the same point, the road to Badajos crosses it more obliquely. The village of Albuera was in front of this conical hill, and in the centre of our position. The bridge was to the right, and a little beyond the village. To the rear of this ridge, and under the shelter of its steep descent, the Allied army lay, entirely concealed from the view of the enemy, until the hour of attack. The Marshal directed his troops on the 15th to cook and dine at Valverde, and then to advance to Albuera. He himself preceded them, and marked out the ground which each division should take up as it arrived. General Blake was stationed on the right, not exactly for the reason assigned by the author, but simply because he came from that flank; and the Marshal did not regret this arrangement, as he considered it the strongest and least likely to be attacked. General Stewart's division, in one line, formed the centre; and General Hamilton's division, in two lines, formed the left of the army. The whole on that day took up their ground behind the hill, being parallel with their battle position, which was on its top; and along the whole length of which, though there were some gentle undulations of ground, no particular prominence occurred, except the conical hill, which has been mentioned, and on the summit of which a strong battery was placed. Colonel Otway, with the remainder of the Portuguese cavalry, was stationed in advance of the left wing, at a point where the ground above the rivulet was high and commanding, to overlook the movements of the enemy on that flank.

Gen. Alten, with the German legion occupied the village, and a brigade of guns commanded the bridge. Lord Beresford, having left staff officers to put the troops in the positions he had assigned them, went to reconnoitre the country in the direction of Talavera, and refresh his memory with its features, though his former visit had already made him pretty well acquainted with it. He proceeded on this object for about two leagues, till he came within sight of the town, and was slowly returning towards Albuera, when one of his aids-de-camp came galloping towards him, with the account that Gen. Long had arrived there in great confusion from Santa Martha, and that the enemy's light cavalry were close upon him. The Marshal's astonishment was extreme. He had very recently received despatches from Gen. Long at Santa Martha, in which not the slightest mention was made of any necessity of an immediate retreat. He hastened back, and found the cavalry still in considerable confusion. After forming these, and placing them in their position, he discovered that the enemy's horse had already occupied the wood, on the slope of the opposite heights beyond the Albuera, and through which the road from Santa Martha slopes slantingly towards the bridge. Between the heights beyond and directly opposite the bridge was a small plain. The wood descended obliquely from the heights opposite to the right of the Allies to the Faria, a little rivulet which falls into the Albuera between the wood and the bridge, forming a tongue of land, over which, according to Col. Napier's plan, the wood extends to the bank of the Albuera; but this, I am certain, is a mistake. This

tongue of land, which is about three quarters of a mile from the lower round hill, and nearly a mile and a quarter from the ridge, on which the original right of the Allies' position was fixed, lies immediately below the highlands, over which the road from Santa Martha passes, slanting through the wood down to the plain. Of the wood the enemy was now in possession. Between the Allies and this tongue of land was interposed the Albuera, which, at this place, is pretty rapid in its course, and still flowing between high grounds, has worn a deep bed, and, is what is technically called *encaissé*. It has been already observed, that the right of the Allies' position was separated from the continuation of the same ridge by a valley, beyond which there was an abrupt ascent corresponding with that on which the Allies were posted. This the Marshal, at one time, thought of occupying; but the separation from the ascending hills beyond it was neither sufficiently marked, nor half so distant, as from his actual position to the heights on which the enemy afterwards took post. He also found, that in attempting to take his position further to the right, he should, wherever he stopped, still have to encounter the same inconvenience of a nearer and a higher ground, which would again require a farther removal, and that to an indefinite distance. Besides, as it was a most material object to command the roads to Badajos and Valverde, and more particularly to the latter, the Marshal would not, on any account, weaken his force in the neighbourhood of those points, by stretching it out or dividing it too much; he therefore, without any hesitation, took up the position on which the battle was fought.

That this decision was made with great judgment shall be most satisfactorily shown, in spite of Col. Napier's dictum.* The only error that appears in Lord Beresford's plans was his omitting to place some infantry in occupation of the wood on the great height beyond the Faria stream, through which the road from Santa Martha passed. This, I understand, had been intended. It could not, indeed, have been maintained against the French infantry for any length of time; but had their cavalry been here kept at bay, the Marshal might have compelled them to show their force on the elevated plain beyond the wood, and, as their infantry only came up during the night, he might thus have prevented their gaining possession of it for the whole of that day. But the unaccountable manner in which Gen. Long abandoned his post, before Lord Beresford even knew of his having left Santa Martha, has already been related: his fault ought to have been repaired. It was not; and whoever was to blame for it, this was certainly an omission. But the reader must not confound these heights with the tongue of land between the rivulets, which, at an after period, Col. Napier blames the Marshal for not having occupied; a subject which I shall notice in its proper place. The historian very accurately describes the state of affairs on Major-Gen. Long's arrival; the dispositions which the Marshal made; the measures he adopted to hasten Blake's march; and also the time when the

* "I am unable to comprehend what *defect there was in the occupation of the ground*, or what disposition more to the purpose the Marshal could have made. It is easier to criticize than to amend an arrangement. However, in page 556, I observe the author praises it himself."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

troops of the latter arrived at Albuera. He is also correct as to the orders sent to Cole and Madden, with the exception of one particular; they were sent earlier than he is aware of, and when the author says, that "the orders failed to reach the latter,"* he appears not to know, or, at all events, does not mention the cause of this failure. The fact is, Madden, not only without directions, but without communicating his movement to the Quarter-Master-General, or leaving a man to receive any orders that might be sent to him, had altogether abandoned his post. That officer crossed the Guadiana, and there remained till the conclusion of the battle; and by his defalcation, the force of the Allied cavalry, already so disproportionately small to that of the enemy, was further diminished by the absence of another brigade. The author often speaks of the fifth Spanish army in a manner which, though correct in point of fact, may, without some explanation, lead the reader to suppose that Lord Beresford's strength was greatly increased by its accession. The misconception thus occasioned is, I am sure, unintentional, as it is stated that "Cole arrived with two brigades of his own division, and with the infantry of the fifth army," that is, with Don Carlos D'Espagne's brigade, which was of 2,000 men, but of which, as is mentioned by the author, "one battalion had been sent to Olivenza;" so that the whole number of the fifth army consisted but of 1500 infantry, and Penne

* Page 531.—"Madden had unaccountably quitted Talavera, which was an important outpost, without orders, upon some unfounded rumour, crossed the Guadiana, and moved upon Elvas. So that the officer who carried the order thither at eight o'clock on the evening of the 15th, could learn nothing of him, but that he was gone."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

Villemur's cavalry, amounting, as nearly as my memory will allow me to speak, to somewhat about 400 men.

Col. Napier says,* "the position was now occupied by 30,000 infantry, above 2000 cavalry,† and thirty-eight pieces of artillery, of which eighteen were nine-pounders; but, the brigade of the fourth division being still absent, the British infantry, the pith and strength of the battle, did not amount to 7000, and already Blake's arrogance was shaking Beresford's authority. The French had fifty guns, but only 19,000 chosen infantry; yet, being of one nation, obedient to one discipline, and animated by one spirit, their excellent composition amply compensated for the inferiority of numbers, and their General's talent was immeasurably greater than his adversary's."‡

It is necessary to analyse the foregoing paragraph a little. Col. Napier, as it appears to me, has considerably increased the force of the Allies, and, in an equal degree, diminished the numbers of the enemy. The former, at the time, were not understood to have exceeded 29,000. I hardly believe they were so many; and though, with regard to the latter, Col. Napier's intelligence was undoubtedly derived from

* Page 532.

† "Infantry { British 7,000; Portuguese 10,000; Spanish 10,000 } ——— 27,000

Cavalry 2,000

20 squadrons, but only nine of them British: artillery 34 pieces of all sorts." —*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

‡ "This is matter of opinion; it certainly was not manifested in this battle."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

an authority most capable of affording him an accurate statement, he did not perchance refer to any official returns. I find it very difficult to persuade myself that the enemy's infantry only amounted to 19,000. Those officers of the British army, who were best fitted to make such an estimate, gave it as their opinion on the spot, that it could not be calculated at less than 24,000 strong; and, judging from the number of the killed and wounded, I cannot conceive the calculation exaggerated. According to this view, the opposing armies were pretty nearly equal in numbers, as, by the bye, they were generally considered at the time. The composition of the two, as is very justly described by the author, was essentially different; and under the circumstances, after reading the result of the contest, every candid man will be astonished at the observation with which the author concludes his paragraph. The sentence is sufficiently expressive of Col. Napier's feeling towards Marshal Beresford. Were there no other indications of his prejudice against him, this alone would be enough to excite the suspicion and distrust of every impartial mind, towards any representation that he may give, or judgment that he may pass with regard to those parts of the Peninsular war in which Lord Beresford was personally engaged. After perusing the first sentences of the paragraph before us, the reader would anticipate, that the worse troops, commanded by a general of talent so immeasurably inferior to his adversary's, would, of course, be beaten and destroyed; and, unless he be a Frenchman at heart, how agreeably will he be surprised at finding them the masters of the field, and conquerors

in a most splendid victory. It is stated in this paragraph, that the "Allies had thirty-eight guns, of which *eighteen were nine pounders.*" This was not the case; every officer, who is at all acquainted with the practice of war, knows how much greater the effect of a *nine* pounder is than that of a *six*. Indeed, on account of their comparative inefficiency, the latter, towards the end of the war, were almost entirely disused, except by the horse artillery. Out of thirty-eight guns, therefore, to describe *eighteen* as nine-pounders, when there were, in fact, but *ten* of that description, is representing the Allies as possessing a force which they had not, and giving a most erroneous notion of their strength. By the bye, on this head I can give the public a specimen of the sort of loose manner in which Col. Napier applies for his information, and of the vague and general kind of information which he is content to take as the grounds of his historical statements. I have said, in the early pages of these strictures, that I could only discover *one* instance in which the author had consulted any officer of distinction on the subject of this part of his work. That instance was the present. He requested from Sir Alexander Dixon a return of the number of guns which the Allies had with them at the battle of Albuera. That officer furnished him with what he asked for; but, as Col. Napier had neither desired to know the weight of metal, nor the calibre of the guns, Sir Alexander was silent on those points. But this was enough for Col. Napier. Furnished with the number of the guns, he himself arbitrarily decided as to their calibre. But the fact is, that there were but *ten*

nine-pounders with the Allies; the remainder were all six-pounders. By which it is apparent that in weight of metal, and consequently in effect, the enemy's artillery was double the force of that of the Allies.

In the foregoing quotation, the author states that "already Blake's arrogance was shaking Beresford's authority." There is not the slightest foundation for such an observation. How could any arrogance of Blake's, whatever effect it might have with Spaniards, shake the Marshal's authority with the Allied British and Portuguese troops? Besides, the author is speaking of a time antecedent to the battle; when Gen. Blake had not evinced the least disposition to oppose, or deny Lord Beresford's authority. I think I perceive what the author alludes to. According to his usual practice, confounding times and circumstances, and exaggerating trifles into importance, he refers to an incident which happened immediately after the battle. The Marshal had sent Lieut.-Col. Hardinge to request that Gen. Blake would send some troops to assist in carrying the wounded French to the rear. This measure was mercifully intended to clear the front, and save the poor men, in case the enemy should renew the attack. The General made some unnecessary objections and delay; and certainly evinced some symptoms of a difficult and intractable disposition. But this was the only instance of "arrogance," if Col. Napier chooses so to call it, which General Blake ever at any moment exhibited.

"Soult," continues the author,* "examined Beresford's position without hindrance, on the evening of the 15th, and having heard that the fourth

* Page 532.

division was left before Badajoz, and that Blake would not arrive before the 17th, he resolved to attack the enemy the next morning, for he had detected all the weakness of the English general's disposition for battle."

It must be evident from what has been stated, that "Soult could have examined Beresford's position without hindrance," from a distance of one or two miles; and I admit that from such a distance, he might have taken a pretty accurate observation of the nature of the ground. But, still, it is difficult to understand, how he could have "detected the weakness of the English general's disposition for battle," as not one half of the Marshal's troops were yet arrived; and those that had arrived, were most perfectly concealed from his view. It will appear evident, that the French commander, great as undoubtedly were his talents, seeing only in part and having the rest to conjecture, mistook, upon this occasion, the strongest for the weakest point. It is, by the bye, very difficult to comprehend how Soult could have heard of the 4th division's having been left before Badajos, or of Blake's not having arrived; as we are informed by Col. Napier, that only the day before "Soult could have no intelligence from Badajoz, and fired his largest guns to endeavour to give notice to that garrison of his approach." But reasons were here required to account for the French commander's determination; and the historian always carries a supply of them on the tip of his pen, ready to flow forth in his justification. He continues*— "The hill in the centre, commanding the Valverde

* Page 533.

road, was undoubtedly the key of the position, if an attack was made parallel to the front; but the heights on the right presented a sort of table land, trending backwards towards the Valverde road, and looking into the rear of the line of battle." I will observe, before quoting the remainder of this paragraph, that the author is correct enough in describing the conical hill as the key of the position, if an attack was made in the front; but he is entirely at fault as to the nature of the ground on which the right of the Allies was stationed. It was not the table land that he represents. It in a slight degree appears such in the plan annexed; but this results from the conventional manner in which all heights are indicated by engravers. The slope begins from the ridge to the front; though the descent from the top may be less marked than when farther down. The entire position, however, will be better understood by referring to the plan of the ground attached to these Strictures. It is somewhat more correct and distinct than that which has been given by Col. Napier, who, without being personally acquainted with the position, and with a very inadequate map before him, argues upon the conduct, and dogmatically decides upon the respective merits of the two commanders, without the slightest sense of the incapacity under which he lies of forming any judgment upon the subject, from his ignorance of one of the most material points. He continues,* "hence it was evident, that if a mass of troops could be placed there, they must be beaten, or the right wing of the Allied army would be rolled upon the centre, and pushed into the narrow ravine

* Page 533.

of the Aroya; the Valverde road could then be seized, the retreat cut off, and the powerful cavalry of the French would complete the victory. Now the right of the Allies and the left of the French approximated to each other, being only divided by a wooded hill, about cannon-shot distance from either, but separated from the Allies by the Albuera, and from the French by a rivulet called the Feria. This height, neglected by Beresford, was ably made use of by Soult.* During the night he placed behind it the artillery under Gen. Ruty, the fifth corps under Gen. Gerard, and the heavy dragoons under La Tour Maubourg; thus concentrating 15,000 men and 40 guns, within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing, and yet that General could neither see a man nor draw a sound conclusion as to the real plan of attack."† I am compelled to enter into a particular analysis of these observations. Had the enemy been able to place a mass of troops, as pointed out by the author (who here fights as if he were manœuvring both sides on a chess-board, and gives the victory to which of the two he pleases), no doubt what he states about "rolling up the right wing of the British army on its centre," would have been effected; but with one proviso, and rather an essential one by the way, the British General must kindly have remained in a perfect state of quiet, and lost in stupid admiration of

*"The author, I apprehend, is not much acquainted with the ground; the occupation of this piece of it, with relation to that held by the Allied troops, was incompatible, and out of the question."— *MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

† "He could not *see* what was out of sight; but he did *draw a sound conclusion*, as soon as there were any grounds to draw a conclusion at all."— *MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

the French General's manœuvre. But, unfortunately for the author's schemes and theories; unfortunately for his military judgment; and most unfortunately for his estimate of the talents of the two commanders, it did so happen, that Marshal Soult made the very attempt which Col. Napier has here post-supposed; but the English General, incapable as he is represented, anticipated the intentions of his adversary; changed his front,—a movement which he had full time to effect, notwithstanding his proximity to the enemy; — frustrated the operation, and obtained a victory. I shall reserve my remarks on the author's statements respecting the seizure of the Valverde road, and the direful consequences that thereby would have ensued to the Allies, for another occasion. Col. Napier talks of the Allied army's being pushed into the "narrow ravine of the Aroya." This ravine is a creation of his own. No such thing exists. There is no feature of the ground which could have given any man acquainted with the country, the slightest idea of a ravine, either broad or narrow, in the place he has assigned to it. And yet posterity is to receive their estimate of the respective talents and skill of two great opposing chiefs from the representations of a person, who was almost totally ignorant of one of the most essential particulars in considering and forming an opinion on the relative dispositions of the contending armies. Col. Napier proceeds to say, that "the enemy had concentrated, during the night, fifteen thousand men, and forty guns, within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing;" but he here conveys a false impression to the reader. It might, perhaps, be about some ten minutes *run* for

an individual; but the enemy had to cross the Albuera stream, an operation which could certainly not be effected in less than half an hour, and was, in fact, nearly an hour in being completed. The historian adds, "that Beresford could neither see a man, nor draw a sound conclusion as to the real plan of the attack." These assertions are wholly gratuitous, and as wholly incorrect. It is first, evident from the author's own account, that Soult could not have done what is here related till the night was very far advanced, as we read* that it was only on "the 15th, in the evening, that Soult's army was concentrated at Santa Martha." Now, this town is three Spanish leagues from Albuera; the French troops had already made their day's march from Villa Franca; and though the roads were good, they must have made some halt at Santa Martha. They could not, consequently, have reached Albuera till long after dark, or rather till 11 or 12 o'clock at night; it would not, therefore, have been very wonderful if Beresford had not seen them. But still, Col. Napier is mistaken. The Marshal reconnoitred the enemy on his right, early in the morning; and he could, and did, see them forming considerable masses, and with guns in the wood. But from that position, it was just as convenient for them to proceed to the bridge, and the front of his position, as to attempt his right, and it was not possible for Lord Beresford to form any certain conclusion with regard to the enemy's intentions. I believe, however, that the Marshal did not as yet think that his right would be attacked. He thought better

* Page 528.

of his adversary's judgment, or rather, perhaps, he knew the ground better. He knew that of the two it was the most difficult and hazardous point for the enemy. In returning from his reconnoitre, he directed Major-Gen. Long to apprise him of the least movement that took place among the French; and so certain was he of their meditating an attack, that I distinctly remember his not even sitting down to breakfast, but keeping his horses at the door, and saying, "the enemy are forming on our right; but I do not think they will attack there."—These words were scarcely uttered, when Major-General Long sent intelligence of the enemy's cavalry being in motion. The Marshal immediately mounted and galloped up to him. On arriving, he saw on the plain, between the wood and the bridge, two columns of infantry and a considerable corps of cavalry, not less certainly than 12,000 men; so that if 15,000 men were already posted in another place, even admitting these numbers to be somewhat incorrect, it will show that the strength of the French army must have been far greater than the author has reported. Before, however, I proceed to discuss Col. Napier's account of the battle of Albuera, I must take a somewhat more extended view of the objects and operations of the two commanders, than that author has thought fit to enter into. In forming our judgment upon the talents which Marshal Soult exhibited on this occasion, and no one can have a higher admiration of those talents than myself, we must not merely look to his conduct at the battle of Albuera, but we must consider whether the line he adopted was the only, or the best, way of effecting the object he had in

hand. Neither does the fitness or the goodness of the position of Albuera depend alone upon the nature of the mere ground on which the battle was fought. Putting aside all the political reasons—though they were, perhaps, even stronger than the military ones—by which Lord Beresford was influenced in his determination to oppose Soult upon that spot, we will take for granted, that his apparent object was his only object; and that the English commander had nothing in view but to prevent Soult from succouring Badajos, and to secure his own retreat in case of a reverse. Col. Napier says: "Soult left Seville to relieve Badajoz;" and this we will therefore take for granted as the only object of the French commander. The nature of the country between Albuera and Talavera has been already described. It has also been intimated that Lord Beresford was never very confident that Soult would attack him at Albuera; it is the strongest, and, indeed, may be said to be the only position which this country affords in front of Valverde. But to relieve Badajos, there was no necessity for Marshal Soult's keeping the road by Albuera. The whole country was passable for every arm, without the slightest difficulty; and he could, therefore, have directed his troops by a route which might have led them across the Albuera stream lower down, after it had left the hills and where it is crossed by roads in several places. The high ground extends very little more than half a league from the bridge, and from the point at which it ceases to the Guadiana, a distance of above two leagues, the country is perfectly level. Had the French commander thus acted, he would either have relieved

Badajos without encountering any opposition, or he would have obliged Beresford to bring his army, such as it is described by Col. Napier, to attempt to manœuvre on the plain, where, by his vast superiority in cavalry and guns, he must in all probability have overwhelmed him. The Albuera stream, in that flat country, is every where passable. If, however, Soult considered himself so superior to his opponents as to be anxious for an opportunity of bringing them to battle; would it not have been wise for him to make some effort to draw them down, from rather a strong position, into the level ground? If Beresford would not have met him there; would it not still have been wise to have succoured Badajos first, and then afterwards to have sought the enemy? Having crossed the Albuera lower down, he might have turned the position of the Allies, which would then have been no longer tenable; he might have obliged Beresford either to come to an engagement on the plains, or to retire to Valverde; he would, indeed, most probably have compelled him to re-cross the Guadiana. The French Marshal had all these operations at his option; and if with his eyes open, for, having but just left this part of Estremadura, he must have known it well, he was presumptuous enough to neglect such obvious advantages, and voluntarily attack his enemy in the best position the country afforded, I cannot really comprehend why Col. Napier should be so tender of Soult's reputation, as not only to let it escape without any censure, but as to dismiss it with a compliment to his talents, at the expense of his more prudent better judging, and more successful opponent. On

account of the reasons which I have given above, Lord Beresford was doubtful whether Soult intended attacking him in his position, until he came in front of it on the 15th. Now, it must be obvious, from the mixed nature of his troops, which were quite unused to act together, Beresford must have desired a fixed position; and, besides the nature of the ground which was favourable for defence, the position which he had taken up possessed the great advantage of covering the two roads to Valverde and to Badajos; the former that of his retreat, the latter that of his enemy's object. Though Soult might have avoided attacking him, yet Lord Beresford was aware that a General would sometimes be guided by such a leading string, and such an opportunity. His hopes, rather than his expectations, were gratified. He was prudent in his measures, and he reaped the fruits of them; and yet no pains are spared to censure this great and judicious commander, and to extol, at his expense, the adversary whom he defeated. Can Col. Napier be angry with Marshal Beresford for having beat his friend? It is sometimes impossible to help suspecting that this may be the case. For my own part, as an Englishman in heart and soul, I can only pray that the Generals of my country may always err after the manner and the example of the hero of Albuera.

I now proceed to treat of the battle itself. Of these there appear to have been two: one fought on the 16th of May, 1811, by Marshals Soult and Beresford; the other fought since upon paper, in the name of those two Generals, by Col. Napier, author of the Peninsular War! The two battles resemble each other in some few features; but, on the whole, they are quite distinct and different.

BATTLE OF ALBUERA.

It has already been related that, while taking a hasty breakfast, Marshal Beresford received the report that some of the enemy's cavalry were in movement, and, on arriving nearly in front of his right, where Gen. Long was posted, he discerned what he supposed the principal part of the enemy's army advancing along the plain, from the wood, towards the bridge. Some guns were immediately brought to bear upon them, and with considerable effect. These columns halted for a short time, and then began to file off by divisions from the left of their rear, directing their march to a point on the Albuera rivulet, above the right of the Allies. The Marshal observed them awhile; and perceiving that the movement was continued, he said, "They attack our right! call Gen. Blake." This officer, who was in front of his troops on his own ground, and at no great distance, immediately joined the Marshal, who observed to him, "You see, Gen. Blake, the enemy's movement; he is going to attack our right; have the goodness to form your front line without delay, and as much of your rear line in addition, as may be required to cover the ground at a right angle with our present line, and occupy the ridge over the valley with your right on its present ground, stretching your left on the top of the hill towards the rivulet; and let the remainder of your second line be formed in the line where your first is, taking ground a little to its left." The General assented, and the Marshal, being satisfied by Blake's answers to some questions which he addressed to him, that his plan was fully

comprehended, instructed him that Sir W. Stewart's division would form the second line to his new front. The Spanish General withdrew to carry his orders into effect. Gen. Long was then directed to send the 13th Dragoons to assist the defence of the bridge, and to station the remainder of the cavalry to the rear. These troops were ordered to take post within the bed of the Aroya Val de Sevilla, being supported by the 4th Division, and from the right of the position. The Marshal, having no reason to doubt Gen. Blake's execution of his commands, proceeded to Sir Wm. Stewart's division, and briefly mentioning the cause of change, gave him instructions for forming the second line of the new position. Sir Lowry Cole was desired to take up a station, which was pointed out to him, oblique to, and at a considerable distance from, what was in fact, the right of both positions. Lord Beresford, for reasons which will hereafter be stated, considered this as the point which it was most important to have guarded. After this he proceeded to the left; and having sent Major-General, now Sir Archibald, Campbell's brigade to support Baron Alten, who was in the village of Albuera, he drew in Gen. Hamilton's Portuguese division to the spot, which had been the right of Sir W. Stewart's, placing it in contiguous close columns of battalions to the rear, and under the conical hill on the Valverde road. The Marshal had just concluded this last arrangement, and considered that the battle order for his new position was perfectly completed, when an aide-de-camp sent by Gen. Blake arrived, informing him that, as the enemy was not proceeding with his attack on the right of the position, but coming against

the original front, his General had delayed the movement directed, and was waiting for further orders. The Marshal, surprised and alarmed at this intelligence, hastily instructed Gen. Hamilton, that he was there as a reserve; that he was not unnecessarily to show his force to the enemy; that he was *á porté* to both fronts, more particularly so to the side of the rivulet; and, in the absence of orders, was to act as his discretion pointed out; and then galloped forward to observe the state of things to the right. On his first glimpse of the tongue of land between the Albuera and Feria streams, he perceived the enemy far advanced in his movement towards attacking the right of his position, nor could he discover any grounds whatever for the contrary opinion which Gen. Blake had formed and acted upon. This error of Blake was very nearly fatal to the Allied army; and it would most certainly have proved so, had not the Marshal arrived, as he most providentially did, at this critical moment. As he did not see Gen. Blake,—he saw him no more during the battle, nor, indeed, since he had instructed him to change his front,—Lord Beresford immediately formed some battalions from the right of the Spanish front, into the new alignement, and brought Gen. Ballasteros, who, from an early hour in the morning had been placed with three battalions on the round hill in front of the right, to form those battalions of the new position more to his right; while Gen. Zayas, being at this time near the Marshal, afforded the additional number of troops which were required to fill up the centre; the line was thus completed. All these movements were performed in a much more hurried manner than was desirable,

on account of the delay which Gen. Blake's mistake had so unfortunately occasioned. The enemy's sharp shooters came up as the last troops were forming into line; consequently, when the action began, they were not so well steadied in their position as they might have been, and as it is desirable for young soldiers to be. I state this in justise to the Spanish troops, who notwithstanding the disadvantage under which they began the battle, conducted themselves in a manner, very different from that which the historian has represented, and most honourable to themselves and to their nation. The reader will now take into consideration the length of the ridge which was Lord Beresford's original position; the several acts he had to perform; the distances he had to travel; and the various instructions he had to give, after detecting the commencement of the manœuvre to turn his right; and having considered these things, and taken into account the time which they must necessarily have occupied, the candid reader will judge of Col. Napier's accuracy and fairness, when he states that the enemy, unknown to the Marshal, was concealed within ten minutes' march of his position. It is evident that Lord Beresford's calculations were correct; and, had his orders been promptly attended to, there was more than ample time afforded for the execution of them. The change in the disposition of Blake's front line, ought not to have taken even the ten minutes allotted by the historian; his own right being then the pivot of the movement. But, notwithstanding this delay, the new position was taken up in the manner which the foregoing description states, and as may be seen by referring to the plan.

Before we proceed to comment on Col. Napier's account of this battle; there are several points which he has censured as errors in Marshal Beresford's disposition of his forces, that must not be allowed to pass without observation.

The author says,* "having heard that the fourth division was left before Badajoz, and that Blake would not arrive before the 17th, Soult resolved to attack the next morning, for he had detected all the weakness of the English General's disposition for battle." It has been admitted that Soult might, at such a distance as could not but have afforded great room for misconception, have examined Lord Beresford's position as stated by the author; but his acquaintance with the position of Cole and Blake, and more particularly of the former, is absolutely marvellous. His information indeed, with regard to movements of Gen. Blake, proved false: yet Marshal Soult formed his plan of attack under such a misconception of the force of his enemy, and has received the commendations of Col. Napier for his conduct. What would this most just and impartial judge, this second Daniel in all military matters, have said, had Lord Beresford acted under the same kind of erroneous intelligence, and pursuing the same measures, encountered the same fate as Marshal Soult? But the author reports that "Soult determined to attack the next morning, having detected all the weakness of the English General's disposition for battle." What a strange author! He has informed us in the very same short paragraph, that "Gen. Blake and Sir Lowry Cole's division were not present," and in

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turning to the very next page,* we find him estimating these two corps at above sixteen thousand men, that is, at more than one-half the force he has ascribed to Marshal Beresford's army. How Soult could have detected the disposition of those two corps at Albuera, where neither of them had yet arrived, remains to be explained. The French Marshal participated perhaps, in those powers of second sight, which appear to be in the possession of our author; but who at the same time, is so deficient in memory that, before he has finished off, and properly rounded the last period of a short paragraph of seven lines, he loses the recollection of the facts which he had stated at the opening of it. But more than this; except Gen. Baron Alten's German brigade, which was stationed in the village of Albuera, not one infantry soldier of the Allied army could be seen by Soult. Oh that mine enemy would but write a book! But to proceed, the author adds, "now the right of the Allies and the left of the French approximated to each other, being only divided by a wooded hill, about cannon-shot distance from either, but separated from the Allies by the Albuera, and from the French by a rivulet called the Feria. This height, neglected by Beresford, was ably made use of by Soult." Had the historian known any thing of the ground he is describing, he he would not, for a moment, have censured Lord Beresford for omitting to possess the small height between the rivulets. The slopes of the wooded hill beyond it were in the enemy's hands. They come down to the Feria, and command completely the heights between that stream and the Albuera. The

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wood, as given in the author's plan, continues across the Feria; and the hill was not, as he has stated, equidistant from the two positions, but directly under that of the French. What then does Col. Napier propose? He conceives that the Allied army should have thrown a corps across the Albuera stream, into a wood under the command of wooded heights, which heights were in the occupation of the adverse party. To me this appears very strange military advice. If the enemy saw fit, he could, under cover of his own wood, and from his superior heights, have driven any body of men from so injudicious a position; and, if indeed he did not entirely crush them by his fire, the very best result that the *debris* of a corps so placed could hope for, would be recovering their original position, to which the enemy, followed by supporting columns, might enter pellmell along with them. Had Marshal Beresford been so unmilitary, as to commit the blunder recommended by Col. Napier; had he stationed a corps in the middle of a wood, or upon this height, if unwooded as I believe it to be, apart from his main army, beyond the Albuera, and with that stream in his rear, he would have weakened his whole line of battle. Had it been really a strong position; he would have driven Soult to attack his centre and left, which were not only the weakest, but the very points which were most necessary to be protected, and of which the loss could not fail of being fatal to his army. But as has been stated, this said-to-be-wooded height was not a position that could have been maintained for half an hour. Had it been taken up, Soult, in all probability, would then really "have detected the weakness of Beresford's position;"

and, leaving him in the quiet enjoyment of Col. Napier's much-admired heights, would have directed all his efforts against the centre and left of the Allies. There would have been no very great impediments for him to surmount. The Albuera stream would have been found there very much less difficult than at the point where he actually passed; he would also have had the advantage of the bridge, which with his superiority of guns, he might very easily have forced; and he would not only have had one corps of Beresford's army out of his way, but that corps would have been cut off without firing a single shot. Indeed, greater still would have been the disaster, if Marshal Soult had once gained possession of the left, or the conical hill; once posted there, he would have been master, not only of the road to Badajos, but of that to Valverde; he would thus have seized on the only retreat for the Allied army, and have really verified the historian's expression of "rolling up the left of the line upon the right," and his superior cavalry would have settled the remainder. There never was so unsoldier-like a proposition as that suggested by Col. Napier. It must, besides, be recollected that, circumstanced as Beresford was, (whatever might have been his own opinion as to coming to meet the enemy on this occasion), the encountering him had now ceased to be a matter of consideration; and that his wish was to tempt the enemy to give him battle where he was. He was not actuated by any silly love of enterprise, or vain-glorious anticipation of victory and honours; but he was conscious that, according to the existing state of affairs, and the nature of his own and the enemy's force, so equal a chance could

never be obtained as in the position he then occupied. The disadvantages which Lord Beresford would have experienced, had Soult manœuvred on his left, have been already explained; and they are such as Col. Napier will, I apprehend, be very willing to admit. He cannot, indeed, do otherwise after his own description of the composition of the two contending armies. The English General, therefore, wished to be attacked in position. He conceived that Marshal Soult would have attacked him in front and towards the centre; and there he had accordingly strengthened himself most. I have reason to think, and Col. Napier may take what advantage he will of the admission, that Marshal Beresford did not expect to be attacked on his right, although he saw the enemy there in masses just before the manœuvre was commenced; but to say that he had neither contemplated nor was prepared for such an attack, would be to ascribe infinitely greater military talents to that officer than I shall pretend to claim for him. It is insinuated that he was not prepared for this movement of the French Marshal. If the reader is inclined from what has been stated to think differently; then the English General has the credit of having well-considered the advantages and disadvantages of his position, and of having provided against the several dangers to which he was likely to be exposed. Marshal Beresford obtains the praise of a prudent commander; and the author's charge of imprudence is proved to be something worse than frivolous and vexatious. But if Col. Napier's charge is just and well-founded; if the English General had not previously considered in his own mind the many

vicissitudes of war; if he had not predetermined the different modes of defence that he would adopt, against the various modes of attack to which he was liable; if his counter-movements against the deliberated operations of Marshal Soult were all made off-hand, in the instant of surprise, on the spur of the moment, I must maintain, that he displayed on that occasion a genius for war which has been seldom equalled, and has never been surpassed. No time for hesitation, or scarcely for reflection, was allowed. The author only gives ten minutes; and yet as we have seen, the position of the whole army was changed with wonderful rapidity and precision, and the different corps were so skilfully disposed, that I have heard officers of rank who were present, and one, to whom Col. Napier gives almost the greatest credit, declare that, if the battle was at the present moment to be fought over again under the same circumstances, they would both in the first and second instances, take up exactly the same ground as was occupied by Marshal Beresford. But to set this question at rest at once, I will only remind the author, that the battle of Albuera was fought in 1811; the Duke of Wellington with the main army being, at that time, about the Coa and Aquada. In the year 1812, His Grace being exactly in the same place, Lord Hill commanded the Allied army in the Spanish Estremadura, beyond the Guadiana; and the French army being then in the province, he fixed upon and took up, foot for foot, the very position of Albuera, which Lord Beresford had taken up the year before. The strong Portuguese brigade, under Gen. Buchan, being placed where the division of Sir Lowry Cole had previously been

stationed, and which is perhaps still more to the purpose, the French General never dared to attack him there.

I now proceed to the consideration of the battle itself. The author's first paragraph has already been remarked upon; the second is pretty correct as to the orders given by Lord Beresford for changing the position of the army. I must, however, briefly observe on his statements respecting Gen. Blake. Beresford, he says,* sent Blake orders to form "a part of the first, and all the second line of the Spanish army, on the broad part of the hills, at right angles to their actual front:" and again, after detailing the Marshal's directions to other parts of the army, he adds,† "this done, Beresford galloped to Blake—for that general refused to change his front—and with great heat told Col. Hardinge, the bearer of the order, that the real attack was at the village and bridge. Beresford had sent again to entreat he would obey, but this message was as fruitless as the former; and when the Marshal arrived, nothing had been done." The reader will at once perceive how excessively inaccurate these passages are. The orders given to Gen. Blake have been already mentioned. He was simply directed to place his front line, and part of his second (if necessary), at right angles to his existing front. These commands were not sent, they were delivered to him, *viva voce*, by the Marshal himself. Blake had no interview, on this occasion, with Sir Henry Hardinge, and never refused to change his front; he had a notion that the enemy had abandoned their mode of attack, which he com-

* Page 534. † Page 535.

municated by one of his aides-du-camp to the Marshal, and, consequently, delayed his movement till further orders. Lord Beresford instantly galloped to Blake's position; and the only thing which can be cited as strictly correct in the above passage of the historian is, that "on arriving there, he found nothing had been done."

"Great," says Col. Napier, "was the confusion and delay thus occasioned, and ere the troops could be put in order the French were among them." It cannot be questioned that there was considerable delay, and that Lord Beresford was obliged to put forth all his activity and energies, but "confusion" there was none; neither can it, with any degree of truth, be said, according to the ordinary acceptation of the expression, "that the French were among the troops." The enemy's skirmishers certainly assailed them before the line was steadied; but they did not approach even to the foot of the height on which it was formed. The account of Werlé's movement is correct, as well as that of the light cavalry to join La Tour Maubourg; "and thus," says the author, "half an hour sufficed to render Beresford's position nearly desperate."* This is one of his usual bold assertions; and except the intrepidity with which it is hazarded, I am not aware of any single merit that attaches to it. The enemy, it is true, were situated

* Page 536.—"I must be permitted to dispute this conclusion: that the obstinacy of Gen. Blake, and the consequent tardiness of the Spanish movement, gave a great advantage to Soult in the beginning of the battle, is certain; but that *it had become desperate* before the Anglo-Portuguese troops had fired a shot, I cannot allow. And if Soult himself thought the whole army was yielding, he reckoned prematurely, as he afterwards found."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

as the historian describes; but the Allies, notwithstanding the delay that had unfortunately arisen, were also well in position: and in fact, having now a considerably less front to defend, they were more compact, and had great masses in reserve. By casting an eye upon the plan it will be seen, that the Spanish second line, and all the troops placed to resist an attack upon the original front, were just as near to the new position as the old. The original line had necessarily been a very extended one, and could have no reserve but the second line, which was nearly as numerous as the first. But here, besides the first line of Spanish, the second of Sewart's division, that of Cole—in what may be designated the preservative position, and the brigade of Alten in the village, the English commander had, exclusive of cavalry, about 12,000 disposable men in reserve. "Two-thirds of the French," continues the historian,* "were in a compact order of battle, on a line perpendicular to his (Beresford's) right; and his army, disordered and composed of different nations, was still in the difficult act of changing its front. It was in vain that he endeavoured to form the Spanish line sufficiently in advance to give room to the second division to support it; the French guns opened, their infantry threw out a heavy musquetry, and their cavalry, outflanking their front and charging here and there, put the Spaniards in disorder at all points; in a short time the latter gave way, and Soult, thinking the whole army was yielding, pushed forward his columns, whilst his reserves also mounted the hill, and Gen. Ruty placed all the batteries in

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position." I do most confidently affirm, that there is not one correct statement in the whole of the foregoing quotation, except that the French, after having cleared the Albuera stream, advanced in compact solid columns. Here the truth of the account ends. The French never were perpendicular to the right of the Allies; for the front of the latter was changed before they came up, as has been already related. The army was in no manner disordered, as is proved beyond all dispute by the continuance and sequel of the battle. The time of which Col. Napier is speaking, is a time previous to, or immediately at the commencement of this well contested action; and, as it continued between four and five hours, is it possible to suppose that, at this moment, the Allies could have been in the worsted condition which the author has described? His observation of the Marshal's having endeavoured in vain "to form the Spanish army sufficiently in advance to give room for the second division to support it," presents us with quite a novel notion of the principles of military tactics and manœuvring! First, the Spanish line could not be formed more in advance; it was on the brow of the very ridge. I speak literally; and had it gone another yard to the front, it must have gone down the steep of the hill. As a military man, with all due deference to the high authority, and talents, and experience, and erudition of Col. Napier, I should have conceived that it was the duty of the general officer, who had been commanded by his chief to place his division in second line, the first being pointed out and visible to him, to have executed those directions properly. It was Stewart's

duty to keep the requisite distance, and his parallel line. It appears that he did neither. The Marshal was, from the misapprehension of Gen. Blake, and the great delay it had occasioned, first busily employed in forming the Spanish line, with which he remained, that he might animate it by his presence, and be at hand to remedy any disaster that might occur. It may be asked, had Stewart room to take a proper distance? What does the author say? He informs us that the original position was four miles long! But Stewart, when Blake was directed to form a new front on his right, was on the left of that general, and, consequently, had he practised the same manœuvre, would have brought his division to the rear by the whole length of Blake's front line, which was one half more than it ought to have been under the circumstances of the ground and position! It is neither customary, nor I believe possible, in an action for the commander-in-chief to manœuvre every division; and, on this occasion, as has been related, Marshal Beresford's attention was necessarily directed to one all-engrossing object. The French skirmishers, as is usual, first came up; their infantry and artillery followed; and having mounted and taken post on the hill opposite to the Allies, commenced a powerful fire; whilst three strong columns, passing along the lower declivities on the right of their position, advanced against the Spanish line. These came fiercely on, but halted immediately below that line, and nearly at the foot of the steep descent upon which it was placed. The battle was now at its height. The whole of the French cavalry which had crossed the Albuera, with the exception

of the small corps of lancers, having gone round to the left of the enemy's army, was kept in check by Lumley's cavalry and Cole's division; but the author's assertions that at this period of the battle, "the French cavalry, outflanking the front, and charging here and there, put the Spaniards in disorder at all points; and that, in a short time, the latter gave way," are without any, even the slightest foundation, in fact. It is incorrect in its whole bearing, sense, and extent! In the position I have described, and as it was placed by the Marshal, with a tremendous fire upon it from the enemy's guns on the opposite height, and from the dense masses of infantry below them, the Spanish line stood with great firmness more than an hour and a half. The reader may, perhaps, be startled at their being injured from the fire of the infantry below them; but such was the fact. For, however extraordinary the halt of the French at that point might have been, and however bad his position, the first line of the Allies was situated so high and perpendicular over him, that the whole of the dense column could direct their muskets against it with effect; as they levelled far above the heads of those in their front. The Spaniards did not, even in the end, break their line, or quit the field, as the author appears to conceive. After having suffered very considerable loss, they began to crowd in groups behind each other. On perceiving this, the Marshal immediately ordered up the second line. The loss of the Spaniards here was about 1500 men; the whole of whom suffered either by cannon or musket wounds. None of the enemy's cavalry appeared against this line, consequently it

was neither "charged here nor there," nor any where; and I can confidently assert, that at no time of the day, or in any part of the field, did the French cavalry come near the Spanish infantry.

The author then proceeding to describe the arrival of Gen. Stewart's division, says*—"At this critical moment, Gen. William Stewart arrived at the foot of the heights with Col. Colborne's brigade, which formed the head of the second division. The Colonel,† seeing the confusion above, desired to form in order of battle previous to mounting the ascent; but Stewart, whose boiling courage overlaid his judgment, led up without delay in columns of companies, and attempted to open out his line in succession as the battalions arrived at the summit. Being under a destructive fire, the foremost charged to gain room, but a heavy rain prevented any object from being distinctly seen; and four regiments of Hussars and Lancers, which had passed the right flank in the obscurity, came galloping in upon the rear of the line at the instant of its development, and slew or took two-thirds of the brigade. One battalion only (the 31st) being still in column, escaped the storm and maintained its ground; while the French horsemen, riding violently over everything else, penetrated to all parts. In the tumult, a lancer fell upon Beresford, but the Marshal, being a man of great strength, putting his spear aside, cast him from his saddle," &c. The above quotation will serve me as

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† "I apprehend that Col. Colborne requested Gen. Stewart to let him retain the right wing of his regiment in column. If this judicious suggestion had been allowed, the impression of the light cavalry upon the brigade could never have been effected."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

a guide in marking the points, time, and circumstances of this battle, and will greatly assist me in showing the very erroneous information the author has received respecting it. Being with Marshal Beresford at this time, who was still close to the rear of the Spanish or front line, on a spot from which he could best descry the enemy's proceedings and acts, I certainly did not see in what manner Sir William Stewart brought up his division, which was in the rear. The Marshal had directed him to form the second line; he could not distrust an officer of his experience, zeal, and knowledge of the service; and from the manner in which he soon after saw Stewart's troops disposed, though certainly too near to him, Lord Beresford had every reason to believe that they had been brought up in line. At the very moment of which Col. Napier is treating, they were actually formed in line close to the rear of the place where the Marshal and his staff were posted. There are two circumstances which mark the fact and the time. The first is, the attack upon the Marshal by a French lancer; when that event occurred, the Spanish line was still unbroken, and most bravely encountering the enemy,—though Col. Napier had already discomfited it, and put it into utter confusion by his friends the French,—and the part of Sir W. Stewart's brigade to which he alludes, was in line to the rear of it. The second circumstance to which I refer, happened shortly after. While the Spanish line was gallantly maintaining the fight, it was fired into by that part of the second division in its rear; from which it would appear that Colborne's brigade, instead of having the lead, formed the right of Stewart's division;

and it is clear, that whether the last-named distinguished officer came up in line or in column, he did not come up parallel to the front line, but oblique. His right was thrown forward, and extended beyond the right flank of the Spanish line, and thus its right brigade (Colborne's) doubled over the latter, and came obliquely upon the left of the French columns in the plain. At this time, but very considerably after the beginning of the battle, a thick misty kind of rain came on, which mingling with the smoke, caused a considerable obscurity. A corps of Polish lancers adroitly took advantage of this state of things.* They had lain concealed behind a small height on the right of Colborne; and having rapidly passed him, they wheeled round on the rear, and carried off a great part of the brigade, together with a howitzer. It was at this part of the battle that the six guns were captured; but all, with the exception of the howitzer, were immediately retaken. The 31st regiment, which was, I believe, in line, and formed the left of his brigade, escaped, as the enemy's cavalry did not reach it. The fact is, that though the atmosphere was dark, these Lancers were observed in time to have been opposed; and the brigade had faced to the right about, with the intention of attacking them, when, as they were on the point of firing, a cry was raised that they were Spaniards. This occasioned a hesitation and delay; and before any further order could be given, the enemy had made their charge. About a dozen of

* "They were so effectually punished, that this body was afterwards found to have had only about 150 left out of nearly 800 horse, of which it originally consisted."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

these men, who had lost themselves in the shock and obscurity, got between the two lines, and were there riding about singly, seeking how they might effect their escape. One of these it was that attacked Lord Beresford as Col. Napier has related. The whole of them were captured, and for the most part by the Marshal's staff. The "sudden shift of wind," which Col. Napier has introduced, with somewhat of dramatic effect, to clear away the obscurity of mist and smoke in which he had veiled the scene, never occurred; but it left off raining, and then Sir William Lumley, as the author has correctly related, perceived the mischief that had taken place, and immediately, and with admirable skill, applied the remedy best suited to the occasion. But though Col. Napier is accurate in this one particular, I suspect that, if Sir Wm. Lumley had been requested to revise some other details which have been given in his history, the account of the battle of Albuera would have been most miserably curtailed of its present proportions. We there meet with charges and cavalry movements of the French against the position of the Allies, which never had any existence but in the imagination of the author. No other charge was ever made except that on Brigadier Harvey's Portuguese brigade of Sir Lowry Cole's division, in passing the plain on its way to attack the enemy. But this was subsequent to the event of which we are speaking, and occurred at a spot where no Spanish infantry had been at any period of the day.

The historian relates, that* "during this first unhappy effort of the second division, so great was

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the confusion, that the Spanish line continued to fire without cessation, although the British were before them; whereupon Beresford, finding his exhortations to advance fruitless, seized an ensign, and bore him and his colours by main force to the front; yet the troops would not follow, and the man went back again on being released." It must by this time be pretty clear to the reader that Col. Napier is quite unacquainted with the regular progress of the battle, and that his first object in writing is to weave together the few isolated facts that may have been related to him, in such a manner as to form an entertaining narrative. No stronger proof of the inaccuracy of his information, and of his strange disregard of order and time in the disposition of his events, could be given than that which is afforded us in the above quotation.

Whatever confusion there was in the second division, occurred long before this part of the action. The Spanish line never, at any moment, fired into the British; and, at the very time referred to by the author, the former still were in the first line. With regard to this fact I cannot be mistaken; because the circumstance of the Marshal's having seized an ensign, and borne him and his colours to the front, happened after the fire of the British on the front, or Spanish line, had ceased. It was on the occasion of this firing that the Marshal desired Col. Robert Arbuthnot to proceed to the rear of the British line and stop it, while every exertion to the same end was made by the Marshal and his staff, who were situated between the two lines, and themselves endangered by its erroneous direction. The firing ceased almost im-

mediately; and Lord Beresford, I remember, then rode up to the regiment nearest him, the 57th, commanded by Col., now Major-Gen. Sir W. Inglis, and rebuked them for their inadvertence. That regiment, and its commanding officer, most nobly performed their parts at a subsequent period of the action. The firing had, from some cause or other, began on the right, and was unfortunately carried on to the left. I recollect that at this juncture, as a Spanish soldier in the ranks close to the Marshal was looking to the rear, an Irish officer of that service, said to him: "To-day is not a day to fly; you are fighting as the comrades of British soldiers." To which the poor fellow replied, "Non, señor mas los Ingleses nos tiraò por atras!"

The author had long before this point of the battle put these Spanish troops to flight, and brought up Colborne's brigade to remedy the confusion of their defeat; though that brigade was most unfortunately nearly annihilated, whilst the Spanish front line was standing firm, bravely receiving and returning the heavy fire of the enemy. "During this first unhappy effort of the second line," says the historian,* "so great was the confusion, that the Spanish line continued to fire without cessation, although the British were before them." It has been shown that at this period, the case was perfectly the reverse; no other mistake of this description ever occurred; and at no time of the battle did the Spanish troops ever fire upon the English.

I shall here, for the instruction of Col. Napier and others, proceed to lay before the reader a brief,

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but more distinct account of the circumstances of the battle, from the firing of the British on the Spaniards till the final flight of the enemy. The Spaniards, having sustained great loss, began, as has been already stated, to get behind each other, and collect in groups. On perceiving this, the Marshal ordered the second line to the front. He himself remained on the spot which he had occupied since the beginning of the action, having in front line, and before him, the gallant 57th regiment. Here it was that he witnessed the striking and honourable circumstance, which he has so well described in his despatch. He saw "*our dead lying, as they had fought, in ranks; and with every wound in the front.*" Perceiving, however, that his gallant soldiers were falling fast, Lord Beresford moved to the right to inspect the state of things in that direction, and more particularly to take a survey of the enemy's left. Lieut.-Col. Hardinge, and some others of his staff, were with him. On reaching this point, he saw at once how advisable it was that an attack should be made upon that flank of the enemy; and, finding several Spanish battalions in column to the rear, he exerted every mode of authority and persuasion to induce them to descend the hill, and to make the desired charge. His orders and expostulations were equally disregarded. In his eagerness to forward the measure, he laid hold of a colonel commanding one corps, and taking him somewhat forcibly to the front, desired him to order his men to follow, the Marshal declaring that he himself would lead them on. All was in vain.—Upon this, the Marshal despatched Col. Arbuthnot to Gen. Hamilton, whom he believed to be still remain-

ing in the position that had been assigned him at the beginning of the action, with orders to send along the back and under shelter of the ridge, one brigade to attack the enemy's left. Lieut.-Col. Hardinge, who was still with the Marshal, was shortly after sent with instructions to the Hon. Major-Gen. Lumley. Lord Beresford having waited some time for the approach of the Portuguese brigade from Hamilton, and finding that it did not arrive, supposed some mistake must have occurred, and proceeded to the rear to discover the cause of the delay; to collect all the reserve, or now unemployed troops, for a decisive operation; and to support and replace Gen. Cole's division, the commencement of whose movements he had just observed. On arriving to the rear, he found that Gen. Hamilton, induced by the appearance of an attempt of the enemy to pass the Albuera, had left his original post, and taken up a position on some heights near the rivulet, and not very distant from the left of the new line. It has been said that Hamilton had discretionary orders, and that the officer, who was sent to communicate this change of position failed in finding the Marshal. Had Colonel Arbuthnot found this division on the spot upon which it was placed in reserve, the movement of Cole's division probably would not have taken place. But much time had now been lost; and Lord Beresford's anxiety under the circumstances was very great. First lighting upon Col. Collins's brigade, he directed that officer to march with all expedition to the right. Lieut.-Col. Arbuthnot at this time rejoined the Marshal, when he was sent with orders for Baron Alten to disentangle his brigade from the village, and on

the arrival of two Spanish battalions, which had been ordered to relieve him, to take post on the ridge near the conical hill, with a view of covering the Valverde road, and being also at hand to succour the real front, or Collins's brigade, as might be necessary. The commander was now about to direct the whole of the Portuguese division to support the front line; when that line was observed rushing forward, and the French flying before it. Baron Alten had not yet quitted the village; and Lieut.-Col. Arbuthnot was sent back with orders for him to remain in that post, while the Marshal himself proceeded to check the too-far advance of the pursuing troops. With regard to the advance of the fourth division, the case was this; Lieut.-Col. Hardinge, after having given his message to Gen. Lumley, proceeded to Sir. L. Cole's position. What the motives were which influenced him at the moment, after the lapse of so many years, he may not himself perhaps be able to assign; but having been with Lord Beresford when he attempted to attack the enemy's left with the Spaniards; being aware that a brigade of Portuguese had been sent for with the same object; and seeing—as from Cole's position the reverse of the ridge was visible—that Hamilton's division was not there, it is probable that these circumstances had their influence with him, and induced him to propose to Sir Lowry Cole that he should advance his division, and charge the left of the enemy. That excellent officer, not having any orders, though he finally assented, was, I believe, with some difficulty persuaded to adopt the measure that had been suggested. Its success, however, was complete. As Cole came in contact with the French, the other parts

of our front line charged them simultaneously; and the victory was from that moment virtually gained. No further resistance of any consequence was made by that portion of the enemy's force which had been engaged in this long and sanguinary struggle. These fled; but his reserve, which was posted on the opposite heights, still made resistance, and kept up a stout, though short opposition. It was, I believe, continued to gain time for conveying their wounded and their artillery across the Albuera. In his official account of the battle, the Marshal has given the credit of this movement to Sir Lowry Cole; and it is with sincere and deep regret that I find myself compelled, in defending Lord Beresford against the misrepresentations of Col. Napier, to bring forward any circumstance which may at all diminish the merit of the movement itself. But I believe, indeed I am sure, that the Marshal never would have ordered that division to advance, but as a last resource, in the most extreme emergency. The moment in which this division made its attack was not of this perilous description. Their corps, as originally placed, formed the very key-stone of the safety of the army, both with regard to its position during the battle, and with regard to our retreat, should such a measure have unfortunately proved necessary. The Marshal, I have said, had perceived the beginning of this movement before he went to the rear. It was, in fact, that movement which hurried him there. It occasioned him the greatest alarm and anxiety. He knew the extreme importance of the post; and Col. Collins, when he was despatched with his brigade to the right, was ordered, unless his presence was impe-

riously required there in support of the battle, to proceed to the rear of the cavalry, and occupy the position of Cole's division. It may be as well, perhaps, to indicate the objects gained by retaining this post. It completely covered the Valverde road, or the line of retreat; it covered effectually, with the assistance of our small corps of cavalry, the right and rear of both the original and the new position; and, under its support, that cavalry became a most valuable part of our army, which could not otherwise have withstood the superior cavalry force of the enemy; besides, to its rear and under its protection, was placed all the baggage and spare ammunition of the Allied troops. I refer the reader to the plan of the battle prefixed to this publication; and the position of that division is so singular that, whether civilian or military, he cannot fail perceiving, at a single glance, that it served all the purposes which I have named, and which it frequently takes half an army to secure. Is the Marshal then to be reproached, either openly or covertly, for not having ordered this division from such a post without the most extreme and pressing necessity? Why, he had, at this instant, 12,000 troops who had not yet fired a musket, and who were infinitely nearer to the scene of action than that division. All these troops could have been brought to bear upon the enemy's left, without having to stand the whole of his fire, and the attack of his whole cavalry in gaining their destined point, as was the case in the movement made by Sir Lowry Cole, and which his division, with their gallant leader at their head, so nobly braved and overcame, though, as the historian states, "with severe loss." The

contest, on the arrival of this division, with the bayonet, was not such as is described by Col. Napier. The effect upon the enemy was almost immediate, quite so upon what had been the combating force. Had there been any long delay; could it be supposed that the French cavalry, so infinitely superior in numbers, discipline, and composition, to our own, would have failed to take advantage of that delay? Would they not have scorned all opposition which Sir W. Lumley, now unprotected, could have offered, and have broken in on the rear of this division and of the whole army, whose safety would have been then entirely compromised? It is really wonderful and hard to be explained, why La Tour Maubourg did not at this moment take some such decisive measure. It was both the belief and fear of Marshal Beresford, that he would have availed himself of the opportunity which was thus opened to him. Measures were taken by bringing troops forward, to anticipate any attack that he might attempt; and the Marshal's uneasiness was great lest they should not be able to arrive in time. Much credit on this occasion is due to the prudent and yet gallant conduct of Sir W. Lumley, by whom the Allied cavalry was commanded.

I have thus been hurried on to the conclusion of the battle, recounting the events truly, simply and briefly as they actually took place; and I now return to point out the errors of Col. Napier in my running commentary on his narrative. In continuation of the paragraph from which I last quoted,* he writes—"In this crisis, the weather, which had ruined Col-

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borne's brigade, also prevented Soult from seeing the whole extent of the field of battle, and he still kept his heavy columns together. His cavalry, indeed, began to hem in that of the Allies, but the fire of the horse artillery enabled Lumley, covered as he was with the bed of the Aroya, and supported by the 4th division, to check them on the plain,* while Colborne still maintained the heights with the 31st regiment; the British artillery, under Major Dickson, was likewise coming fast into action, and Sir W. Stewart, who had escaped the charge of the Lancers, was again mounting the hill with Gen. Houghton's brigade,† which he brought on with the same vehemence; but instructed by his previous misfortune, in a juster order of battle. The weather now cleared, and a dreadful fire poured into the thickest of the French columns, convinced Soult that the day was yet to be won."

That the misfortune to Colborne's brigade originated in the temporary obscurity of the weather, is not to be disputed. The same cause must also have impeded the view of Marshal Soult; but could the objects before him have been discerned more clearly, he would have perceived the original heights of the position, occupied as they were at the commencement of the battle, and unassaulted, except by the fire of his troops. As to keeping his heavy columns together; neither his orders, nor all the exertions of his

* "Very true; but can this be admitted without allowing ability to the disposition, and to the Marshal who made it?"—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

† "The Marshal himself conducted this brigade. It was deployed under cover of the hill, and then advanced in line."—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History.*

devoted generals and officers, could have extricated the three dense columns, which had advanced to the foot of the position, and there unaccountably halted. At the period referred to by the historian, those columns had been nearly two hours upon that spot, and their loss was immense. We saw from our elevated situation their gallant officers vainly using every effort to deploy them into line. Sometimes a company or more filed out; but the fire of the Allies was so severe, that they ran back into the column as to shelter. After several abortive efforts, the attempt to move them was given up; and they remained in their disastrous position till the moment of their final break and flight.

The author speaks of "the enemy's cavalry hemming in that of the Allies."—Sir Wm. Lumley, I apprehend, will not allow the truth of this statement. They certainly tried to outflank him; but, supported and covered as he was by Cole's division, he, notwithstanding their superior numbers, out-manœuvred them and defeated their project. Col. Napier has here very inadvertently paid the highest tribute to Marshal Beresford's judicious manner of distributing and placing his forces. Such, we find, were his arrangements that, even at his weakest point and with very inferior cavalry, he baffled all the enemy's attempts to injure him. "Colborne," says the author, "still maintained the heights,"—what heights? He cannot mean those of the original position; for it was about this period of the battle that the Marshal has been represented as seizing a colour ensign; an event which most certainly occurred on the right of those heights. The gallant Houghton was at that time

seen stoutly fighting below them; and, of course, the author cannot imagine that one regiment could cover those heights, on which some thousand men were in alignement. But this confusion of circumstances naturally results from the author's strange ignorance of the ground and the then position of affairs. He speaks of W. Stewart "mounting the hill;" but to the rear of the Allies' position there was no hill to mount. In that direction there was nothing but a very gradual slope; less abrupt, to my belief, than that of a glacis. The front of the position was abrupt and steep, but somewhat less so on the angle which constituted the pivot of the new and old positions; that is, the right, the post now in question, whence the roots of the hill stretched further into the plain, and with some interruptions or breaks. It was there that Colborne's and part of Houghton's brigades were engaged. In the succeeding paragraph* the historian says, "Houghton's regiments soon got footing on the summit; Dickson placed the artillery in line, the remaining brigade of the second division came up on the left, and two Spanish corps at last moved forward." I cannot reconcile this with any part of the action. As to the remaining brigade of the second division, which the author describes as "now coming up," it was not at any moment near this particular part of the battle. It had long been stationed in line, to the rear of the left of the first or Spanish line, where it remained, till, as has been related, the second line advanced, took the place of the first, and finally charged the right flank of the enemy. Now Houghton, all the

* Page 538.

while, was on his left flank. Neither was the whole of that officer's brigade with him. The 57th, which was a part of it, was also at the same period behind the first line, prolonging the right of the alignement of the remaining brigade of Stewart's division, which was under the command of Col. Abercrombie. It was after the Marshal had endeavoured to bring forward some Spanish troops, as related by the author, and was standing on the hill, that he observed Gen. Houghton cheering on his men. Almost the very moment after, he was seen to fall; but as he rose immediately, the Marshal said "he is not hurt; it is only his horse that's shot." But alas! though that was indeed the case, only a few minutes later his life was given to the cause and in the service of his country. The author tells us that now "Dickson placed the artillery in line." It had been placed and in position from the beginning of the action. "Two Spanish corps," he says, "at last moved forward." He has not named them, nor could he: no such event ever occurred. With the exception of the front line, as originally placed by Lord Beresford, no Spanish corps ever came into action. "Still," proceeds the historian,* "the struggle continued with unabated fury, Col. Inglis and twenty officers, and more than 400 men out of 570 that had mounted the hill, fell in the 57th alone, and the other regiments were scarcely better off." There is no doubt with regard to the loss which our brave soldiers sustained. But all the rest of the account is confused and erroneous. As to "mounting the hill," Col. Inglis came up the gradual slope from the rear in the regular manner.

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He was, as has been stated, in second line long before the Spanish line was relieved by the second division: that division then occupied the position of the Spaniards on the brow of the hill; from which, except by the fire of their musketry, the enemy never made any attempt to drive them. Col. Napier informs us,* that "ammunition failed; and, as the English fire slackened, the enemy established a column in advance upon the right flank." The whole of this intelligence is perfectly new to me; as I believe it is to every other officer of the Allied army. No failure of ammunition was ever reported to Marshal Beresford; nor, perhaps, is Sir Alexander Dickson, up to this very hour, aware of such a circumstance. It is true, that the chief efforts of the French were on the right; they were directed against the troops that had descended to the lower slopes of the height on which the army was posted (Colborne's and Houghton's brigades in succession); but the enemy never possessed the upper height itself, the original second position of the Allies. Col. Napier, abounding in original information on this subject, states that "the Polish Lancers charging, captured six guns." This is confusion worse confounded. Here we have the repetition of an event which the author has before related. These six guns were taken in the charge of the enemy's Lancers,—the only charge they ever made, —on Colborne's brigade long before this part of the battle; and, adds this most accurate of all historians,† "In this desperate crisis Beresford, who had already withdrawn the 13th Dragoons from the

* Page 538. † Page 539.

banks of the river, and brought Hamilton's Portuguese into a situation to cover a retrograde movement, wavered:"—neither the 13th Dragoons nor Hamilton's Portuguese were ever withdrawn, as here stated: "But Beresford," says the author, "wavered; destruction stared him in the face, his personal resources were exhausted,* and the unhappy thought of a retreat rose in his agitated mind." Putting aside all question about the means by which Col. Napier discovered the workings of Marshal Beresford's mind, I can only say, that the conduct which he ascribes to that general, gives the direct contradiction to his assertions. He represents him at this very time as employing his resources, as engaged in manœuvring and changing the position of his troops, and as "calling away the 13th Dragoons from near the bridge, and moving Hamilton's Portuguese." Now, including Collins's brigade, the Portuguese corps amounted to 8000 men. The Marshal was, besides, changing the position of Alten's German Legion. He had, moreover, 4000 Spanish troops disposable and in line in rear of Hamilton's division, and the 13th Dragoons. At this critical period, then, according to Col. Napier's own account, as well as according to the real fact, Beresford was not in any degree wavering, but was prosecuting the measures which, under the circumstances, any military man of fair judgment and moderate experience would approve as most proper and opportune. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the personal resources of the Marshal had not failed him. It is true, that he had intended, and given

* "Never!"—*MS. Notes on Col. Napier's History*

directions for, the removal of Hamilton's division; but, except Collins's brigade, that change of position became unnecessary, and did not take place during the battle. So much for Col. Napier's facts and information. But he knew what was passing in the Marshal's mind, and reprobates the very idea of his even thinking of a retreat:—"the *unhappy* thought of a retreat rose in his agitated mind."—Col. Napier will almost always supply his opponent with the arguments and the authorities that are required for overthrowing his judgments and opinions. He appears to blame Lord Beresford for entertaining the idea of retreating. It is an extraordinary accusation to make against a General that he should anticipate and be provided against every possible contingency. But the author very frequently argues less with a view to the matter than the person that he is treating of. According to the description of the battle of Albuera, which he has given, the event was precarious from the very commencement; and there was no moment in which "the thought of a retreat" ought to have been absent from the mind of the commander, or could be fairly designated as *unhappy*. But, though to be prepared for a retreat is wrong in Lord Beresford, the Colonel entertains a very different opinion when Napoleon is concerned: and, while in page 539 we have him insinuating his covert censure against the Marshal for even thinking of such a step; in page 312 of the same volume of the same work, we find him vindicating Buonaparte against the accusation of never having entertained such a thought. Wondrous inconsistency! It is imputed as a reproach to one General to have omitted the consideration of a

measure under the ordinary circumstances of war, while it is imputed as a reproach to another General to have admitted the consideration of it, under circumstances which the historian himself has denominated "the desperate crisis of the engagement." There can be no doubt that Lord Beresford had always before his eyes and on his mind, the necessity of being prepared for the worst. What but the contemplation of a possible necessity for their retreat led him to construct the *tête de pont* opposite Jerumenha, and to have fixed upon a position to the rear at Valverde? Besides, this was one of his principal objects in placing Cole's division. The fear of having his retreat cut off, was the cause of his anxiety on witnessing the advance of that division from the post he had assigned it. We admit all this, despite the great military authority of Col. Napier, who adds—I presume,* as a proof of his assertion that the Marshal had meditated a retreat,—"yet no order to that effect was given." Most true, indeed; and this General is here again, as in so many other instances, blamed, not for what he really *did*, but for what the historian, with whom he has not the slightest acquaintance, presumes to suppose that he *thought*. But he continues:—"It was urged by some about him, that the day might still be redeemed with the 4th division." No person whatever spoke of such a movement to the Marshal. I challenge Col. Napier to name any single individual, who either suggested himself, or heard the suggestion of that movement given by another. "Whilst he hesitated," says the historian,† "Col. Hardinge boldly ordered Cole to

* Page 539. † Ibid.

advance, and then riding to Col. Abercrombie, who commanded the remaining brigade of the second division, directed him also to push forward. The die being thus cast, Beresford acquiesced." Now, at the moment here spoken of, Hardinge was with Cole's division; and Lord Beresford was half a mile from him on the hill, the right of the position. It does so happen, that at the time all these suggestions, hesitations, and acquiescences of the Marshal, are described as having taken place, no single individual of the staff was with him. Who then has collected and related all these curious anecdotes, with which the Colonel has indulged his readers? It was this very absence of the officers of his staff, which, on observing Cole's movements, obliged Lord Beresford to go himself to the rear to bring up other troops; when, from Col. R. Arbuthnot's not returning, nor any troops appearing from Gen. Hamilton's division, his Lordship became apprehensive that some mistake or mischance had happened. It is stated,* that at this period, "on the lower slopes of the hill (the position), a Spanish and an English regiment, in mutual error, were exchanging volleys, and that Col. R. Arbuthnot, pushing between the double fire of the mistaken troops, arrested that mischief." The action here described would have been as foolish as it was unlikely to arrest the mischief.—Long before Arbuthnot could have been observed or heard in such a confusion, he would inevitably have fallen a sacrifice to his temerity. But again, this event never occurred; and if it had, Col. Arbuthnot could not have been the person to have stopped it, for he was not upon the spot. At

* Page 540.

the time assigned to this circumstance by the author, that officer was in the rear, according to the Marshal's orders, to bring up a brigade of Portuguese. This incident is another duplicate account, with variations, of what had taken place at a previous period of the battle. I have a letter of Col. Arbuthnot's now lying before me, which gives the contradiction to Col. Napier, and corroborates my account. It cannot be necessary to make any observation upon this strange farrago of blunders, inaccuracies, and mis-statements.

But I must here draw the reader's attention to a more general consideration of the situation of the two contending parties at this time. The author states, that "the whole of Werlé's reserves were now coming forward to reinforce the front columns of the French." To this fact I do not object, though I did not perceive it; but I will show, that according to the numbers at which Col. Napier has estimated the entire force of the enemy, either the first line must at this period have been nearly annihilated, or at least so far reduced in numbers, as to have been incapable of making the efforts attributed to it; or that the whole of these reserves of Werlé must have been very inconsiderable. Those officers of the Allied army with whom, at the instant and subsequently, I have talked over this matter, calculated the enemy's columns, which advanced in the first attack and halted under the hill that constituted our position, at 14,000 or 15,000 men, the whole of whom were infantry. Col. Napier states the whole amount of the French infantry at only 19,000; I have considered it as much greater. Now, at the time we are speaking of, which is the critical moment of the conclusion of

the battle, the loss of the enemy was calculated, on grounds which shall be immediately stated, at about 11,000 men, that is, momentarily "*hors de combat.*" Of these, not more than 500 would have been cavalry, as that force of the enemy had been brought very little into action. If, then, 10,000 infantry were *hors de combat*, Col. Napier may divide the remaining 9000 between the first line combating, and the whole of Werlé's reserve; though we must insist on his leaving a corps of at least 1000 or 2000 men behind the Albuera stream, as at that point also, there was a reserve of artillery, or rather a corps was left to protect and cover the enemy's retreat. Besides which, there were 1000 or 1500 men always posted in front of the village of Albuera, quite distinct and distant from this part of the field of battle. If then we calculate these two corps at 3000 only, so many deducted from the 9000, would leave but 6000 for the whole of Werlé's reserve, united to the remains of those who had formed part of the enemy's original columns of attack. Now, at that moment, Beresford, including Collins's brigade, and independent of the second and fourth divisions, with the whole of Blake's corps that had been in first line, could have brought up 12,000 fresh troops; and this he was on the point of doing when the French began to give way and fly. Which of the Generals, then, was it whom "destruction was staring in the face?" The author may reasonably call in question the great loss attributed to the enemy; but I can assure him that there are good grounds for that calculation. The Quarter-Master-Gen. counted on the left bank of the Albuera, upwards of 2500 of the enemy killed, and about 1000

others were left on the field, suffering from wounds of the severest description, wholly incapacitated from leaving the spot on which they fell, and of whom the greatest part would inevitably die.

Thus, supposing we estimate the number of those who were left wounded on the field, and died there, and those who were killed on the right bank of the river at 500, and add them to the 2500 above-mentioned, the enemy's loss of life would amount to 3000; and allowing only two and a half wounded for one killed, the least proportion I believe ever given, it would make 7500 wounded, and 10,500 *hors de combat*. But if we adopt another mode of estimating the enemy's loss; if we take the 2500 dead on the field; and if (even omitting all consideration of those who were killed on the right bank) we add 1000 prisoners badly wounded; another 1000 wounded who were left by the enemy in his retreat, and taken in the several towns and villages between Albuera and Villa Franca; and if we then look to the letter of Lieut.-Gen. Gazan, dated from Ribiera, 19th May, in which he states his having arrived there with more than 4000 wounded, we must conclude that there are 9500 clearly put *hors de combat;* and I cannot conceive myself as estimating the amount too high, when I conclude that the collected numbers of those who were momentarily disabled by slight wounds, who were killed on the right bank; who died in the retreat, which, as Gen. Gazan intimates, were not a few; and who were missing and variously unaccounted for,—I cannot conceive myself as estimating the collected number of these too high, when I set it down at 11,000 men. Let the state then of

the two armies be contrasted at the moment of crisis mentioned by Col. Napier; and though the two Generals could not at the time be accurately acquainted with their respective losses, yet they must have been distinctly seen and felt, not only by the commanders, but by the very troops themselves. The battle had lasted four hours. The opposing soldiers, as Col. Napier states, were frequently within pistol shot; and indeed, during the whole time of action, the main battles were scarcely sixty or seventy yards apart. As the Allies were placed in line on the top, and at the edge of the eminence, and the French were in mass directly below, Marshal Beresford had the advantage of being able to distinguish the state of affairs at every period of the engagement. He must have seen and known that he had the advantage; that destruction was not staring him in the face; that his resources were not exhausted; and consequently could have had no cause for wavering, or entertaining the thought of a retreat. After this long exposure of the errors and mis-statements of Col. Napier, and the incidental account of the real course of the action, it is not necessary to offer any further remarks on the conclusion of his narrative. I assent with all my heart to the just tribute of admiration which he pays to the undaunted courage and firm discipline of the officers and troops who were engaged on that occasion.

The battle is continued in a new chapter; though it really finished with the events stated at the close of the last. The author here again begins to manœuvre Collins's, Hamilton's, and Alten's troops. The former had been already moved, and were in the

action. The two latter had not been moved until the action had entirely ceased, and the enemy was driven behind the Albuera. He here acknowledges the great and overwhelming resources that remained to Lord Beresford, and fully corroborates what I have said upon that point. He admits that, besides the entire of the Spanish front line, which had not been engaged, there remained 10,000 fresh men under the command of the three officers above-named; so that, if the original Spanish front line was only 4000 men, the historian gives the Marshal a disposable force of 14,000 men at the conclusion of the battle. Believing and recording this fact, and describing Beresford as active during the whole engagement in manœuvring the troops, what could have induced him to say, that "his resources were exhausted, and that destruction was staring him in the face?" He gives the Marshal, at the end of the battle, 14,000 infantry, which had not been engaged; and, if his account be correct, the enemy, at the commencement, had but 19,000, which, collected in great masses, had been engaged nearly five hours, frequently within pistol-shot, never at more than sixty or seventy yards distance from the Allies, and in a place where there was neither tree, nor shrub, nor stone to protect them.

The English General did not, as Col. Napier has stated, follow up the attack of the fusileers with the Germans and Portuguese; nor did any Spanish troops advance on the occasion. On the contrary, the Marshal, in person, called back the troops who were hotly and irregularly pursuing the enemy whom they had defeated, while the French artillery was

playing furiously against them. It was on this occasion, that the Marshal's horse was shot under him.

The author says,* "Beresford was too hardly handled to pursue." I do not quarrel with the expression. The Marshal had seen his best troops very greatly diminished; but his principal reason for not pursuing Soult was found in the overwhelming superiority of the French cavalry, in a country every where well suited to that arm. Col. Napier affirms,† "that nearly 7000 of the Allies, and above 8000 of their adversaries, were struck down." This, when the relative positions and circumstances of the two armies and the result of the battle are considered, must appear a very extraordinary proportion of loss between the contending parties. The account is entirely incorrect. In referring to the return of loss sent home on that occasion, and to which I understand Col. Napier has had access, I find that the loss of the British and Portuguese, including serjeants, drummers, and rank and file, is 3770 killed and wounded; give for the Spanish loss 1700, it will make a total of 5470. This is somewhat short of 7000. And even if 527 which were returned missing be added, still the loss of the Allies would be under 6000. Now if we turn to the enemy, it will be seen from the letters of the Marshal Beresford to Lord Wellington, the 5th day after the battle, that the loss of the enemy was then, from very good data, estimated at somewhat more than 9000 men; but subsequently, and from more particular information, it appeared that the loss, in killed and seriously wounded, amounted to more than 9500; and fair

* Page 542. † Page 543.

and just reasons have been given for estimating the numbers of those who were placed for the time *hors de combat*, at 11,000. But from Col. Napier's account, it would seem that the Allied army had, at the commencement of this battle, 30,000 infantry, while the enemy had no more than 19,000. He states the loss of the Allies as being under 7000, and that of the French as above 8000. Now, if we deduct 6500 from the Allied force, we leave them 23,500 infantry remaining unhurt; and, if we take 8500 from the enemy's 19,000, we leave him no more than 10,500.* Thus, at the beginning of the battle, Col. Napier makes the Allies to exceed the enemy's infantry by no more than about one third; while at its conclusion, it is represented as more than doubling it; and yet he does not hesitate to affirm, "that destruction stared the Allies in the face." I am aware that Col. Napier's numbers are not to be relied on; but if they were correct, such would have been the relative condition of the two armies;—and thus we see, that his blundering assertions may be refuted by the very statements which he himself has given; if the reader will but take the trouble of comparing them.

* Sir Benjamin D'Urban states—that, during the action, the combating part of the enemy's force was continually "fed from their reserves." This is quite in contradiction to Col. Napier's account, who, as we have seen, speaks of Werlé's reserves coming up, as a considerable body, at the end of the battle. I have shown that, if there was any reserve, its numbers must have been very small; Sir B. D'Urban shows that the enemy's reserve had, long before the moment indicated by the author, been absorbed in the *corps de bataille*. These two statements exactly tally with each other; and with the result which we arrive at, by deducting the number of the French killed and wounded from that of their original force. This is a calculation which must be correct, whatever the historian, or the poet, may relate to the contrary.—If in an army of 19,000 men, 10,000 are put *hors de combat*, no more than 9,000 can remain.

The historian's detail of the state of things after the battle is equally jumbled, confused, and incorrect, as that part of the work on which I have taken the trouble to comment. But I shall now finally take my leave of Col. Napier, simply adding, that as far as my personal experience will allow of my forming a judgment on his work, "the History of the War in the Peninsula" is as incorrect in its statements, and as ignorant in its reasonings on all military operations, as it is perspicuous and attractive in style, and often eloquent in language. With regard to the spirit of the book, nothing can be worse.—Colonel Napier is, we know, a liberal of the first water; his book is written with the spirit of an inquisitor: the union of the two characters is not uncommon.

REPORT

OF THE

OPERATIONS

OF THE

RIGHT WING OF THE ALLIED ARMY

UNDER

Field-Marshal Sir Wm. Carr Beresford,

IN

THE ALEMTEJO AND SPANISH ESTREMADURA,

DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1811.

BY

M. GENERAL SIR BENJAMIN D'URBAN.

PREFACE.

Having lately read that part of the 3d Volume of Colonel Napier's History of the War in the Peninsula, which treats especially of the operations in the Alemtejo and Spanish Estremadura in 1811, under Marshal Lord Beresford, I have been very forcibly impressed with a sense of the injustice which it does to the character of the Marshal (whose services to his country and to the general cause, during that war, were, unquestionably, of no common order), and with its obvious tendency—and that, too, after a lapse of twenty years—to detract from his high and well-earned reputation. With a view to counteract this injustice, I have been induced to publish a short report of those operations, which I had prepared some years ago for another purpose, and which was only intended for the information of a very few friends, to whom it was then sent.

No minor motive could have impelled me to publish this, because I am well aware of its defects of style and composition, which, besides, will be but the more apparent, contrasted with the brilliant and classic language of the History of the War in the Peninsula.

For these defects, however, in a plain and unpretending military report, I throw myself with confidence upon the indulgence of the military reader, because it contains a true and faithful relation of the operations which it proposes to record. With the combinations and movements of these, their circumstances, motives and results, I could not, in the post which I held during their progress, but have been well acquainted; and their authenticity, as I have detailed them, rests upon documents which cannot err, and which are, fortunately, still in existence. I believe in the general correctness of my relation of the battle of Albuera.—I am well aware of the difficulty of accurately describing such a conflict in all its varying changes, but I think I may securely appeal to those officers yet living, who were there and competent to judge (among others, for instance, to Sir William Lumley, Sir John Hamilton, Sir Archibald Campbell, Sir Henry Hardinge, Sir Charles Broke Vere, General M'Creagh, and Colonel Hillier), whether my personal employment throughout that day, was not such as to have enabled me to observe, and to know, as much of its events, and their causes, as, perhaps, any individual who was upon the ground.

As it appears to me, that the *essential* imputations to the Marshal's prejudice, with which the History of the War in the Peninsula abounds, have been sufficiently answered, by anticipation, in the succession of facts and circumstances recorded in my report, with the observations arising from some of them,—I should now leave it, without further preface, to the judg-

ment of the impartial and unbiassed, but that I see in the HISTORY, two charges brought against the Marshal, of so grave and serious a character, that I cannot pass them by without especial notice here.

These are as follows:—

1st. It is stated in page 499, that "Marshal Beresford preferred halting until he could procure the means of passing the Guadiana at Jerumenha, an error which may be considered as the first and principal cause of those long and bloody operations, which afterwards detained Lord Wellington nearly two years on the frontiers of Portugal."

This is indeed a heavy censure!—but, is it just?

Without dwelling upon the matters of fact, that, in less than nine months after the period in question, Lord Wellington was in possession of Ciudad Rodrigo,—in twelve months, of Badajoz,—in fifteen months, of Madrid, having previously won the battle of Salamanca, and a month afterwards, with his advances (at Breviesca) upon the Ebro:—

Without entering into an opinion upon the practicability of the wide movement suggested in the HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA (considering the resources, and other circumstances, of the corps), or of its expediency;

It is answered, that the Marshal *obeyed the instructions of Lord Wellington*,—instructions advisedly given, and with a full knowledge of the country, and of all that was probable.

These were, "so soon as he should have cleared the Alemtejo of the enemy, to throw a bridge over the Guadiana at Jerumenha, enter Spanish Estremadura, and after having got possession of Olivença, and pushed back the corps of Marshal Mortier to a sufficient distance, to invest Badajoz.

Did not the Marshal obey these instructions? Upon what grounds would he have been warranted to have done otherwise? Did he not obey them with the utmost possible diligence and expedition?

2d. It is stated in pages 549 and 550, that "the true cause why the English General resolved to fight a battle instead of retiring, was the impatient temper of the British troops, and that he yielded with an unhappy flexibility to their clamours," and he is accordingly severely censured for fighting.

This again.—The having fought an unnecessary battle, and from undue motives,—is a heavy imputation!—but, is it just?

I was at that time the Marshal's Quarter-Master General; I am convinced that he honoured me with his full confidence, and I conscientiously believe that the reasons which induced him to fight, were those and no other, which I have detailed in the 13th and 14th pages of my Report.—For these clamours of the troops, therefore, assigned as the real cause for fighting in the HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA, (which, besides, I never heard of at the time), I must regard them, and the effect ascribed to them, as imaginary.

Let us now consider whether the Marshal was not borne out in his conclusion to fight?—Just three weeks before it was adopted and acted upon, Lord Wellington, contemplating the coming circumstances, as they afterwards existed, thus writes in his instructions:—

"*Elras, 23d April*, 1811.

"During the siege of Badajoz, Marshal Beresford's object will be to place his troops in such situations as that they will be best able to carry on the operations, and to join, in case the enemy should attempt to relieve the place.

"If the enemy should make the attempt, Marshal Beresford will consider of, and decide upon, the chance of success, according to a view of the relative numbers of both armies, and making a reasonable allowance for the number of Spanish troops which will co-operate with him in any attack which the enemy may make upon him. *If Sir William Beresford should think his strength sufficient to fight a general action, to save the siege of Badajoz, he will collect his troops to fight it.* I believe that upon the whole the most central and advantageous place to collect his troops will be at Albuera. I authorize him to fight the action if he should think proper, or to retire if he should think not.

"(Signed) WELLINGTON."

The Marshal *did* think his "strength sufficient," and thus being directly within the condition of the instruction, he obeyed it.—He "fought the action"—and—he won it.

For the rest, it is difficult to imagine that a measure which Lord Wellington had just before regarded as probable,—as one which might become expedient, and which he expressly authorised, should have been so unwise, so "unwarrantable upon any sound military principle," as the HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA considers it.

Here I feel assured that the Marshal will stand acquitted by the unprejudiced, of this latter imputation, as well as of the former.

I cannot conclude this Preface without a passing observation upon the unqualified opinion advanced in the 547th, and some other pages of the HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA, (which treat of the battle of Albuera), in disparagement of the Marshal's reputation as a commander. That detraction was early at work to diminish the lustre of his achievement at Albuera, I was aware *then*;—that its effects have been perpetuated, I am verry sorry to see *now*. My own opinion of him, as it appears in my Report, is totally different from that expressed in the HISTORY. I had sufficient grounds whereon to form it at the time;—the Marshal's conduct in the subsequent battles of the war (in most of which I had also full opportunity to observe him), confirmed it,—and I retain it still.

In the subjoined Note,* however, will be found that of a much abler judge of military talent, whose testimony will not, perhaps,—as may be gathered from the general tenor of the HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA,—have the less weight with its author, because it is that of a French General.

The masterly disposition of the 4th division and of the cavalry, to which General Dumourier adverts in his letter, of which the results were so beneficial, and which is praised *even* in the HISTORY OF THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA (see page 556),—emanated entirely from the Marshal, nor has any one a claim to participate in it; and this I securely affirm, because I placed those troops upon their ground, by *his* direction, and received from his own mouth, the orders for their guidance which I then gave to their respective Generals.

B. D'URBAN,

Camp-House, Demerary, 21st May, 1831. *Major-General.*

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* [From General DUMOURIER, to Marshal Sir WM. BERESFORD.]

"*No.* 11, *Leicester Place, 6 Juin,* 1811.

"MON CHER GENERAL,—Je me rappelle avec bien du plaisir d'avoir fait connoissance, chez Mons. le Duc de Kent, avec le vainqueur d'Albuera, et depuis ce tems, cet excellent Prince, qui à pour vous une grande estime, et qui m'honore du même sentiment, m'a tenu au courant de tout ce que vous avez fait depuis que vous commandez les Portugais; Il a fallu votre caractère et vos talents, et certainement une grande constance, pour ramener cette nation aux vertûs heroiques qui l'ont rendue pendant deux Siècles, l'admiration de l'Europe.

"Vous venez d'etre bien recompensé de vos soins et peines, en gagnant à leur tête une grande victoire contre le plus habile des Generaux de Bonaparte, qui plein de confiance dans l'excellence de ses troupes, et dans sa grande superiorite en cavalarie et en artillerie,—comptoit bien vous eneantir; le mouvement decisif que vous avez fait faire à la division du General Cole pour la placer en écharpe, à l'attaque des Espagnols, est une manœuvre des maitres de l'art; et le plus grande exemple que j'en trouve, est à la bataille de Pharsale, où César, qui n'avait que mille hommes de cavalarie contre sept mille, plaça de même, en diagonale, sur le flanc droit de sa ligne, sept cohorts, qui par leur prolongement empecherent la cavalarie de Pompeé de tourner ce flanc, qui auroit ete ecrasé.—Ce mouvement fut pour lui, comme pour vous, la cause du gain de la bataille. Vous avez fait plus que César; il menoit une armée de veterans attaches à sa fortune; vous avez une armée nouvelle, composée de trois nations difficiles a amalgamer; vous leur avez inspiré le même esprit, et vous en avez tiré le même service.

"Recevez mes felicitations sur vos succès, mes esperances sur votre gloire future, et croyez moi avec les sentimens que vous meritez à tous égards.

"Mon cher General, votre tres humble et tres obeissant Serviteur,

"(Signed) Le General DUMOURIER

Operations, &c., &c.

In the beginning of November, 1810, while the Allied army occupied the position of Sobral and Alhandra, Lord Wellington had sent the cavalry of the right wing, with a brigade of six-pounders, over the Tagus, as a corps of observation; and when, later in the same month, Marshal Massena broke up and retired to Santarem, the infantry of the right wing had also crossed that river at Vallada, and its cantonments extended along the left bank from Benavente to Abrantes, which latter place had been put in a state of defence, and in which there was a Portuguese garrison.

The immediate object of this arrangement, was to observe the movements of the enemy upon the right bank, to impede any enterprise which he might have in view upon the Alemtejo, and to cut off his communication with the army of the south; while, at the same time, the corps thus employed, was equally in readiness to repass the Tagus by its left, or to cross it at Abrantes by its right, should circumstances require either.

It was under the orders of Lieut.-General Hill, and consisted of

Artillery.

One Brigade, nine-pounders. Portuguese.
One ditto, six ditto. Portuguese.
One ditto, six ditto. German.

Cavalry.

13th Light Dragoons. British.
Two Brigades (four regiments). Portuguese.

Infantry.

One division (the second). British.
One ditto. Portuguese.

It was afterwards joined, during the month of December, by a weak division of Spanish infantry, under Don Carlos d'Espana.

Towards the close of December, General Hill having been under the necessity of going to England for the recovery of his health, Field-Marshal Sir William Beresford was requested by Lord Wellington to take charge of the right wing during his absence, and repaired to Chamusca accordingly.

At this period Lord Wellington, with the centre and left of the Allied army, was upon the right bank of the Tagus, and had his head-quarters at Cartaxo.

His advanced posts extended from Rio Mayor on the left, along the right bank of the Rio Mayor river, to the Ponte d'Asseca, and thence in a direct line to the Tagus on the right.

The whole of the troops were in cantonments; the cavalry from Almoster to Rio Mayor on the left, and in the plain of the Tagus on the right: the infantry, in column, from Almosteir to Alcoentre in rear of the left, with a division at Torres-Vedras; and from Vale (in front of Cartaxo) to Alemquer in rear of the right.

Marshal Massena had his head-quarters at Torres-Novas. He occupied the entrenched position of Santarem, with his advanced posts along the left bank of the Rio Mayor, while the ninth corps d'armee, which had arrived from Spain in the beginning of January, held the country about Leiria and Alcobaça, to facilitate the collecting of subsistence, which had begun to fail in the valley of the Tagus, and was, at the same time, within reach to co-operate with the main body of the army.

The enemy had posts along the right bank of the Tagus from Santarem to the Zezere. He occupied, in considerable force, Golegao, Barquhinha, and Tancos, while a division at Punhete had established a bridge of boats over the Zezere, throwing up works upon both sides of that river, with an advanced corps at Montalvao, and pickets beyond Rio de Moinhos on the road to Abrantes.

When Sir William Beresford took the command of the right wing of the Allied army, its duties were becoming, more than ever, arduous and complicated; for a corps of 15,000 strong, from the army of Andalusia, under Marshal Mortier (afterwards joined by a reinforcement under Marshal Soult), having passed the Sierra Morena, were advancing to the Guadiana, behind which river the Spanish army of Estremadura, under General Mendezabal, retired, and the enemy first possessing himself of the bridge of Merida, took Olivença, with the Spanish garrison, by a short blockade, and then sat down before Badajoz, which place (having defeated and dispersed the army of Mendezabal), he completely invested and besieged towards the close of February. During these operations the corps of Don Carlos d'Espana was withdrawn from the right wing of the army on the Tagus, and sent to the Spanish army upon the Guadiana.

It was natural to suppose, nay it was certain, that Marshal Massena had been long and anxiously looking for co-operation and assistance from the south; and an intercepted letter, in the beginning of January, announced his expecting the immediate arrival of the corps of Marshal Mortier. His means of subsistence could not last much longer, nor be renewed where he was: the necessity, therefore, of a movement, was fast approaching; and, whether with a view to further operations against Portugal, or of retiring into Spain, no measure, perhaps, was more feasible and expedient than that of passing into the Alemtejo, as soon as he could give his hand to the southern succours.

The disposition of his left (as already described) afforded him a great facility of preparation for such an enterprise. The Tagus, between Goligao and Rio de Moinhos, was known to offer several fords after a few days' dry

weather,* not far from which the troops for passing might have been assembled unobserved, while the position of Santarem would have covered and protected the movement, which might have been combined with a diversion upon the part of the army from the south.

Whatever were his real views, there was every appearance of his preparing and collecting all the collateral means to aid such an undertaking; for he was actively employed in building boats in the Zezere, and was known at one period, to have completed eighty.

These and other indications might be feints, but they might also point to his true object.

From the beginning of January, therefore, when the corps of Marshal Mortier reached the Guadiana, and was in possession of the bridge of Merida, it became necessary for Sir William Beresford to take such measures as might combine the different objects of watching and impeding the passage of the Tagus; cutting off all communication between the Marshals Massena and Mortier; concentrating to receive and oppose the latter; and of moving by his left to cross the Tagus at Valada, or by his right upon Abrantes, if Lord Wellington's operations and orders should require either.

To this combination, then, all his views were directed; and immediately after his arrival at Chamusca, and having carefully reconnoitred and become acquainted with the localities and circumstances of his position, he made his arrangements accordingly.

In the doing this, every possible consideration was paid to the comfort and convenience of the troops, who were cantoned in the villages upon and near the river, the pickets and posts d'avertissement upon the most important points along its banks, being for the most part taken by the ordenancas of the district. The artillery was disposed of in batteries commanding the most practicable passages, but with every provision made for its being rapidly moved to the points of assembly previously determined. These were well known to all concerned, and beacons and signals were established along the whole extent of the country occupied.

Cavalry posts were thrown well in advance upon the roads leading to the

* On this point I differ entirely from Sir Benjamin D'Urban. I am sure that his statement is made on the best information the author could procure, and that no trouble was spared to secure the best; but I am equally certain that it is not given from personal knowledge. While the belligerents were on the Tagus, neither man nor horse ever crossed the river by means of a ford. The reason given for the fall of the Tagus is not sufficient. The rising and subsiding does not depend on the weather of Portugal, but of Spain; and in the beginning of March, the season in question, the melting of the snows on the long range of mountains through which the river flows, affords a far more copious and regular supply of water than the rains of winter.—Col. Napier has here followed Sir Benjamin D'Urban, and though in error, I admit that he had every right to adopt his information as of the best authority.

southern frontier, and speedy and sure communications arranged with Elvas and Campo-Mayor.

Such precautions were adopted for preventing all communication between the French army of Portugal and that on the Guadiana, but there is reason to believe no effort upon the part of either to apprise each other of their wishes or their views, succeeded.

Good sources of intelligence were established not only in the rear of the enemy, but even in the towns of Golegao and Santarem; in the latter of which Sir William Beresford succeeded, a few days after his arrival at Chamusca, in securing the correspondence of a person equally judicious and devoted. Meanwhile every unnecessary fatigue to the troops was studiously avoided; and, at the same time that the utmost vigilance and attention pervaded the corps, all was quiet and tranquillity throughout.

This was the state of things during the months of January and February. The Marshals Soult and Mortier seemed altogether occupied with their operations upon the Guadiana, and either ignorant or regardless of the pressing wants and critical circumstances of Marshal Massena.

In the end of February and beginning of March, considerable reinforcements from England having arrived in the Tagus, Lord Wellington determined, as soon as they should have reached the army, to make a combined attack upon the enemy's cantonments and position, directing it upon his right from the side of Rio Mayor, while his own right wing, crossing the Tagus at Abrantes, was destined to operate against the establishments on the Zezere, and thus, penetrating by the rear of the French left, to place itself upon the road to Thomar, and there get into communication with the troops advancing from the side of Rio Mayor.

This enterprise would probably have sealed the fate of the French army of Portugal, which, taken in reverse, and shut in between the Tagus and the Zezere, must have perished.

Marshal Massena, however, despairing of co-operation from the south, his means of subsistence nearly exhausted, and perhaps aware that Lord Wellington's reinforcements were at hand, was already preparing for retreat, and sending off baggage, sick, and heavy artillery, to the rear.

During the first days of March there were so many corroborating indications of a movement being near, that, on the 5th, Sir William Beresford began to close up his right upon Abrantes, and had the boatmen and bridge there in readiness to fall down the river as soon as the troops should have passed.

On the night between the 5th and 6th the enemy quitted Santarem, and began his movement to the rear; but his division at Punhete remained on the 6th, and, in obedience to Lord Wellington's orders, the troops which had been closing to the right were therefore passed over the river with all possible expedition, and assembled at Abrantes in the evening, under the immediate orders of the Hon. Major-General Stewart.

They moved upon Punhete before daybreak on the 7th, but the enemy had withdrawn from thence in the night, burnt his bridge and other boats, and marched upon Thomar. Sir William Beresford met the troops at Punhete, having crossed in a boat from the left bank of the Tagus.

The boats of the bridge of Abrantes had fallen down the Tagus as soon as the troops had passed, and arrived at the Zezere nearly with the head of the column, so that it commenced crossing the river without delay, and was in time to press the enemy's rear, upon the road to Thomar. The whole of these troops were over the Zezere by twelve o'clock, and were joined by those which had remained on the left bank of the Tagus, opposite Punhete and Tancos, and which had now crossed in the boats from Abrantes, and the few belonging to the villages of the left bank, which had been preserved.

They were all moved forwards upon the road to Thomar, where they awaited Lord Wellington's orders, and from whence they afterwards proceeded to that place.

As soon as the troops had passed, the boats fell down to Tancos and Arripaida, where the bridge was permanently established over the Tagus for the communication with the Alemtejo. Lord Wellington was now naturally anxious to relieve Badajoz, which was hard pressed, and in imminent danger, having sustained the greatest misfortune that could befall it, short of being taken, by the death of its able and intrepid governor, Don Rafael de Menacho, killed in directing a successful sortie. His loss was quickly followed by that of the place.

His Lordship proposed to employ Sir William Beresford's corps upon that service (adding to it the 4th division, and replacing one of the brigades of Portuguese cavalry by one of British heavy 'dragoons) as soon as the enemy's retreat should be so decided that he might afford to detach such a force from the operations against Marshal Massena, which for the present were very justly considered as paramount to all other objects. Meanwhile the town was apprised that Marshal Massena was in retreat, that it would infallibly be speedily relieved, and exhorted to hold out to the last under that conviction.

Sir William Beresford then commenced his preparations for a movement to the south, disposed of the part of his force which remained upon the Tagus, along the road to that frontier, and advanced a brigade of cavalry to Portalegre.

On the 9th of March, however, the appearance of the enemy gave Lord Wellington reason to judge that he might probably fight a general action near Pombal, about Punhete, and he therefore called Sir William Beresford to him, and was under the necessity of suspending, for the moment, the return of that part of his corps which had passed the Tagus.

Marshal Massena having declined battle at Pombal, the troops of the right wing who had followed him were sent back to the Tagus, and disposed in like manner as those which had remained, cantoned in order of march,

for several leagues along the road to Portalegre, ready, however, to be concentrated for the protection of the bridge of Tancos, should the enemy from the south unexpectedly advance into the Alemtejo.

The Hon. Major-General Stewart was charged with the command of these troops, and his head-quarters were at Tramegal.

After the affair of Redinha, on the 12th of March, Lord Wellington seeing that the enemy again declined a battle, sent back the 4th division, and the British brigade of heavy cavalry destined to join Sir William Beresford's corps, towards the Tagus.

On the 13th, his Lordship was apprised of the fall of Badajoz, (which the successor of General Menacho had surrendered to the enemy, notwithstanding his having received Sir William Beresford's letter, assuring him of speedy relief),* and although it was now too late to save the place, yet, as its loss had laid the Alemtejo open, he was not the less anxious to send the force already ordered for that duty to the southern frontier, so that when after the affairs of Chao do Lamas on the 14th, and of the Ceira on the 15th, it was evident the enemy would continue his retreat to the frontier, without engaging in any thing more serious than actions of his rear-guard, Sir William Beresford set out from Lousao on the 16th, to the corps on the Tagus, and reached it on the 17th, having, on his way, closed up the 4th division and the heavy cavalry (which he found at Thomar) to Tancos and Arripiada.

He put all the troops of his corps in movement upon Portalegre on the 18th, proceeded thither himself without delay, and reached it on the 20th.

The corps now consisted of

Artillery.

One Brigade of nine-pounders. Portuguese.
One ditto of six ditto. Portuguese.
One ditto of six ditto. German.

Cavalry.

13th Lt. Dragoons.
3d Dragoon Guards.
4th Dragoons. } British.
1 Brigade (2 Regiments). Portuguese.

Infantry.

2d and 4th Divisions.
Portuguese Division.
1 Brigade of Portuguese Infantry.

Meanwhile Marshal Soult having returned into Andalusia, Marshal Mortier remained on the Guadiana, with from 12 to 15,000 men, and had

* It appears that he surrendered on the evening of the same day, in the morning of which he had received the letter, and presented it to the French General upon his entrance.

entered the Alemtejo, and besieged Campo-Mayor, occupying at the same time Albuquerque and Valenca d'Alcantara.

Sir William Beresford was very anxious to relieve the place, took measures to apprise the Governor of his being in movement to do so, and the march of the troops from the Tagus was expedited to the utmost: they could not, however, arrive in time, for, on the 22d (the day of their assembly at Portalegre), the garrison was obliged to capitulate.

No delay was made in advancing to recover it, and there was some reason to hope that Marshal Mortier might still be found there with the gross of his corps. The army continued its forward movement on the 23d, and on the morning of the 25th reached Campo-Mayor, which the enemy had abandoned at its approach, and retired upon Badajoz, his rear guard only being found near the town.

His force upon the ground consisted of about 1500 infantry (three full battalions of the 100th regiment) and 1000 cavalry, and he retreated in excellent order, but so rapidly, that only the cavalry and two six-pounders could overtake him.

Sir William Beresford, whose own infantry was not up, would not suffer that of the enemy to be attacked by his cavalry alone, for, as he was not strong in that arm, and had no prospect of what he actually had being augmented, he very justly considered it too precious to be committed in an affair, where the advantages of the most complete success would not have been commensurate to the probable loss of achieving it; a loss, which perhaps, at the opening of the campaign, might have crippled all its subsequent operations.

In following the enemy's column, however, an occasion was found for attacking his cavalry, notwithstanding that it moved very near to, and appuied itself upon his infantry.

This cavalry was the 26th Dragoons, and the 2d and 10th Hussars. Colonel Head charged it with 13th Light Dragoons, supported by two squadrons of the Portuguese brigade, under Colonel Otway. The attack was admirably executed, and the success complete. The enemy's cavalry was routed, driven off the field, and pursued, to the bridge-head of Badajoz, It suffered severely, particularly the 26th Dragoons, who lost their Colonel and eight officers, and were almost entirely destroyed. The Allied cavalry, in pursuit of the French, overtook the detachment of artillery, which had been employed in the siege of Campo-Mayor, fell upon them, and cut them to pieces. The infantry meanwhile continued its retreat with all possible speed to Badajoz.

The recovery of Campo-Mayor was followed by the immediate evacuation of Albuquerque and Valenca d'Alcantara.

This movement, having re-taken Campo-Mayor, (from which Marshal Mortier had not had time even to remove the rations in the magazine), and cleared the Alemtejo of the enemy, the troops went into cantonments in and

round Elvas, that they might repose a few days before their future operations, and be supplied with shoes, of which they were much in need. By this measure no time was lost, for the different preliminary arrangements were not complete; and it was necessary to the soldiers, as they were, for the most part, excessively fatigued by long and continued marches, first in pursuit of Marshal Massena, and afterwards from the Tagus to the Guadiana.

Sir William Beresford then garrisoned Campo-Mayor, and proceeded to Elvas, to prepare for entering Spanish Estremadura. He had been instructed by Lord Wellington, as soon as he should have cleared the Alemtejo of the enemy, to throw a bridge over the Guadiana Jerumenha, enter Spanish Estremadura, and, after having got possession of Olivença, and pushed back the corps of Marshal Mortier to a sufficient distance, to invest Badajoz. Together with these instructions, he had been informed that the necessary means for carrying them into execution would be found at Elvas and Jerumenha; that twenty large Spanish boats, amply sufficient to form a bridge, had been sent to the former place from Badajoz, when the French were in march to besiege it; that pontoons would have arrived from Lisbon, and that a considerable quantity of serviceable boats were in the Guadiana, near Jerumenha; that there would be a sufficiency of money and of shoes; and that magazines had been formed for the supply of the troops during (at least) the commencement of their operations, as well as adequate transport to enable these supplies to reach their future destination.

Unfortunately, none of all this was the case, although it had been so reported to Lord Wellington, and Sir William Beresford had the mortification to find that, of the twenty Spanish boats, only five were forthcoming, and these could not be made to reach across more than one fourth of the channel; that there were no serviceable boats to be found upon the river; and that the pontoons (when they did arrive) were only six in number, small, and unequal to support any inconsiderable weight, or to resist the force of the stream if placed at large intervals; that, so far from any depôt having been established for the future subsistence of the troops, or transport prepared for its conveyance, the commissariat had not the means of feeding them from day to day, even in the neighbourhood of Elvas; so that the current issues were obliged to be drawn from the stores of that fortress, at the risk of leaving it unprovided, while of transport there was an almost total want; and that of shoes, which the troops stood in greatest need of, (especially the 4th division, which had lately joined the Alemtejo corps, returning from the pursuit of the army of Marshal Massena), there was no supply at all adequate to the occasion.

These were most essential wants, and the difficulties resulting from them were, at first view, very embarrassing. Sir William Beresford, however, was not to be stopped by any thing short of absolute impossibilities. He made a faithful representation of the state of things to Lord Wellington, and then proceeded to create means for executing his orders, notwithstanding obstacles which appeared insurmountable.

There were no other boats to be found beside the five already mentioned, for all those in common use upon the river had been long before burnt or concealed, to save them from the enemy; and the pontoons, few in number, were nearly useless. He conceived the project, therefore, of stretching out chevalèts upon piles, from each bank towards the middle of the river; and where it was deepest, and the current strongest, to unite the chevalèts by the five boats, forming at the same time a flying bridge, for light weights, of the pontoons.

The Guadiana at this period was low; and, not being rapid, it appeared feasible to form a bridge in this way, over which the army might pass; and, for supplies, he confided in the resources of the country he was going to occupy, provided the exertions of the commissariat could furnish enough for the first few days' operations.

Captain Squire, of the Royal Engineers, was accordingly directed to proceed upon the construction of the bridge with all possible expedition. The Spanish boats were brought upon carriages from Elvas, to the neighbourhood of Jerumenha, and all the spars, beams, and other requisite materials, that could be found in those places and the neighbouring towns and villages, were collected for the purpose; while Mr. Ogilvie (the Commissary-General of the corps), used every effort that diligence and ability could dictate to amass provisions for the first period of its entrance into Estremadura, and until he could expect to profit by the resources of the country.

Every exertion also was made, during these few days of unavoidable inactivity, to complete the different regiments in shoes, the long and continued marching having left them almost barefoot. The most pressing injunctions were dispatched to Lisbon, to forward a supply, and the means of all the surrounding towns and villages were put in requisition to the same end.

On the 30th of March, a part of the necessary materials having been collected at Jerumenha, the engineers began upon the bridge. General Castanos, the Captain-General of Estremadura, had arrived at Elvas, and from this time was in constant communication with Sir William Beresford, and rendered every assistance in his power.

During these preparations, a division of the fourth Spanish army was at Frejenal, upon the skirts of Andalusia, in observation of the enemy. General Morillo was at Albuquerque and Villa del Rey, with two or three weak battalions of the fifth army; and the Count de Penne Ville Mur, with a few squadrons of cavalry of that army, was in advance of him at La Roca and Montijo.

The corps of Marshal Mortier had been occupied, ever since the affair of Campo-Mayor, in collecting and placing provisions in Badajoz. He held Merida, extended his foraging columns to Medellin, and into the Serena, and was making every effort to supply the fortress without appearing to pay the slightest attention to the views of the Allies in the neighbourhood of Jerumenha.

His whole force might consist of from 10 to 12,000 infantry, and from 1800 to 2000 cavalry; considerably dispersed, it is true, but he always retained about half of it near Badajoz.

At this period there was a ford over the Guadiana, near Jerumenha, passable with some difficulty for cavalry; and a squadron was sent over the river as a post of observation, that the workmen at the bridge might not be surprised. This cavalry, however, had strict orders to remain concealed and very quiet, and to occasion no alarm by pushing patroles to any distance.

Sir William Beresford now caused the country on the left bank in front of Jerumenha to be carefully reconnoitred, and a position was found there very favourable for the assembly of the corps after it should have passed the river, about half a league in front of the bridge.

This position, compact, and small in extent, was upon a semicircular range of heights; its right upon the little village of Villa-Real, covered by a swampy and almost impassable rivulet; its centre curving across the Olivença and Badajoz roads; and its left upon the Guadiana.

Upon the 3d of April the bridge was reported in readiness; the troops were therefore moved from their cantonments in the night, assembled very early in the morning of the 4th in the woods near Jerumenha, and all was held in preparation for passing; when, at day-break, it was discovered that the Guadiana, which had hitherto been low and tranquil, had swelled in the night from some distant cause (probably rains or melting snows in the mountains of its source), had risen three feet of perpendicular height, swept away the chevaléts and other preparations, rendered the cavalry-ford impracticable, and totally put an end to all possibility of passing for the present.

There was no hope of the river's immediately falling, for it continued to increase, nor of finding materials for making chevaléts anew, even if they could have been of use, in the actual state of the stream: it was necessary, therefore, to resort to other means, and Sir William Beresford caused the five Spanish boats to be formed into two floating bridges for the passage of the cavalry and artillery; and, having collected all the casks in the adjacent towns and villages, added them to the pontoons, and constructed a bridge upon them; not very substantial indeed, but, upon trial, found capable of admitting the infantry to pass in file.

While this was laying down, and the floating bridges constructing, a battalion of light infantry on the opposite bank, covered the work.

These new preparations could not, with every possible exertion, be completed till the evening of the 5th; and even then the bridge of casks and pontoons was not practicable, nor could it be made so till the middle of the 6th. The passage now commenced, however (without waiting for it), upon the two floating bridges. Three squadrons of cavalry passed to reinforce that already on the other side, accompanied by the 2d division,

under the Hon. Major-General Stewart, and the brigade of six-pounders attached to it.

This division, as soon as it had crossed, was placed upon its ground in the position already described; Major-General Hamilton followed with the Portuguese division, and then the Hon. Major-General Cole with the 4th.

The cavalry and artillery belonging to the divisions continued to pass by the two floating bridges. The work of crossing was not intermitted for a moment, day or night, from the time it commenced; and yet, so insufficient were the means of passage, that the last of the 4th division and of the cavalry, had not crossed till eight o'clock on the evening of the 7th, nor the nine-pounders and division baggage until three in the afternoon of the 8th.

Meanwhile the enemy, who, by a singular negligence or fatality, had made no effort to interrupt the passage of the river, or even to reconnoitre what was going on there during the preceding days, when he might have opposed the operation with a rational prospect of success, seemed inclined to make an attempt, now that it was too late; and on the evening of the 6th assembled a corps of 3000 infantry, 5 or 600 cavalry, and four guns, at Olivença for the purpose.

Sir William Beresford had not failed to receive intelligence of this design in the course of the day. He had accordingly apprised the Generals of it; and, repairing himself to the position in the afternoon, saw that all was in readiness for whatever might occur, and remained with the troops during the night.—At three in the morning of the 7th, the enemy advanced rapidly upon the road to Villa-Real, and his cavalry approached the right of the position, where, being fired upon by the pickets of the 4th division, and observing the heights occupied, he gave up his design, and retired with all possible speed upon Olivença. The enemy in his approach had contrived to surprise a squadron of cavalry, which was in advance of the right of the position, and which unfortunately suffered considerable loss.

The army remained in the position of Villa-Real all the 7th and 8th, both of which days were not more than sufficient (so slow was the passage of the river, notwithstanding every diligence and exertion) to complete the getting over the nine-pounder brigade, the light reserves of ammunition, the division baggage, and a small supply of biscuit and rice, all that the Commissary-General had been able to procure.

The corps thus assembled in Spanish Estremadura, consisted of

18 pieces of Artillery,
1,400 Cavalry,
20,000 Infantry.

And when it is considered that with this the province was to be cleared of the enemy (who, besides what he had actually in it, had several detached corps upon the frontiers), and Badajoz invested, with the very probable con-

tingency also of Marshal Soult's making an effort to relieve that fortress, Sir William Beresford's force, although the utmost that Lord Wellington could afford to give, would appear to have been but a small one for the duties it was destined to fulfil.

Two Spanish light guns, sent by General Castanos, followed the army on the 8th, and were attached to the cavalry under Brigadier-General Long.

Every thing absolutely necessary having closed up in the night of the 8th, Sir William Beresford, whose intelligence announced that Marshal Mortier was drawing in all his detachments, and assembling upon Valverde and Olivença, put the corps in movement upon the latter place, early in the morning of the 9th.

The enemy had retired upon Valverde and Albuera, leaving a garrison of 400 men in Olivença, who, on being summoned, refused to surrender; it was necessary, therefore, to send to Elvas for some twenty-four pounders, to breach the place. The weather being now very inclement, and the bread and slaughter-cattle for the next three days not yet up, so that the army was without provisions, it encamped in the woods round the town, which was closely invested.

Major Dickson, the commanding officer of artillery, was despatched to Elvas for the battering-guns and ordnance stores necessary for the siege; and Mr. Ogilvie went thither also, that his personal influence and exertions might add weight to the measures for forwarding to the army a farther supply of provisions (seeing that it would be yet, perhaps, a few days before it could avail itself of the resources of the province), and that he might arrange for the regular subsistence of the division to be left before Olivença, which, as it could not expect to draw any thing from the immediate neighbourhood, could only be fed, during the siege, from the rear.

For these and all previous purposes of supply, since the arrival of the army upon the Guadiana, nothing had been provided by the magazines which Lord Wellington had directed to be prepared for this corps, and which he had been led to contemplate as ready and sufficient; and the very little that was actually furnished, was the effect of Sir William Beresford's influence and efforts since he had been upon the spot.

Meanwhile, immediately that the army had established itself on the left bank of the Guadiana, a tête de pont was traced out, covering the passage, (which was also under the guns of Jerumenha), of sufficient extent to receive 30,000 men. Captain Witikind, of the German engineers, was left to complete this tête de pont, and to construct a more substantial bridge, that the communication with Portugal might be secured: a regiment of Portuguese militia was placed at his disposal to work, and a strong detachment of British infantry, with a part of Brigadier-General Madden's Portuguese brigade of cavalry, remained for his protection.

On the 10th, General Castanos (at Sir Wm. Beresford's desire) had caused Count de Penne Ville Mur, with the Spanish cavalry from the side of

Montijo, followed by General Morillo with his division of infantry, to occupy Merida, from which the French garrison had withdrawn; and the Count pushed on his advanced posts to Almendralejo.

On the 10th also a communication was opened with General Ballasteros at Frejenal.

Some biscuit and cattle having arrived on the 10th, the second division, accompanied by a part of the cavalry, moved on to Valverde, and encamped in the woods in front of it, upon the junction of the roads to Almendral and Albuera.

On the morning of the 11th Sir William Beresford followed, with the Portuguese division and the remainder of the cavalry, leaving the 4th division under the Hon. Major-General Cole, the brigade of nine-pounders, and Brigadier-General Madden's cavalry, to reduce Olivença.

When the Portuguese division and the cavalry now marching from Olivença, had closed up to the troops in the camp of Valverde, the whole moved together upon Albuera, and took up a camp in the woods beyond it, upon the roads leading to Almendralejo, Fuente del Maestre, and Santa Martha; and by this movement, as Marshal Mortier had retired from Albuera to Fuente del Maestre, and the Count de Penne Ville Mur was at Almendralejo, the enemy's communication with Badajoz was entirely cut off.

His cavalry had quitted Santa Martha, which was occupied by the advance of that of the Allies, extending on the right to Almendral, and on the left to Solana, from whence they were in communication with the Count de Penne Ville Mur.

On the 13th, a brigade of the 2d division occupied Talavera-Real, for the purpose of drawing supplies from that quarter; and the army now began to profit by the resources of the country, although not to the extent that was to be expected upon a farther advance.

On the 14th, Sir William Beresford knew that General Ballasteros, having been attacked by General Maranzin in the neighbourhood of Frejenal, had been pushed back with some loss, and closely followed upon Salvaterra de los Barros. An officer was, therefore, sent to the General, to assure him of support; and to suggest, at the same time, the possibility of his drawing the enemy still farther in advance, so that he might expose himself to be intercepted by the Allied corps now moving on.

On the 15th, Olivença surrendered at discretion to the Hon. Major-General Cole. Captain Squire had constructed a breaching battery in an old out-work. On the night of the 14th, Major Dickson having brought four twenty-four pounders from Elvas, placed them in the battery; and these with two nine-pounders and a howitzer, having opened upon the place at six in the morning of the 15th, it surrendered at eleven.

Sir William Beresford now put the troops in the camp at Albuera, in movement upon Zafra: and, on the night of the 15th, they encamped in the

woods near Santa Martha, where the brigade from Talavera joined the 2d division.

This movement upon Zafra had for its object to clear Estremadura altogether of the corps of Marshal Mortier (with a chance also of intercepting the retreat of General Maranzin, should he be induced to continue his pursuit of Ballasteros), to give confidence to the people, and thus secure the resources of the province during the siege of Badajoz.

On the night of the 15th there was intelligence which made it just possible that Marshal Mortier might hesitate about retiring from Llerena before a small corps; and as expedition, and a speedy conclusion of all that might delay the attack of Badajoz, was, upon every account, desirable, orders were despatched to the Hon. General Cole at Olivença, to occupy that place with a battalion and the cavalry of General Madden, and to march by Almendral upon Zafra.

On the 16th, the troops from the camp at Santa Martha moved upon Zafra and Los Santos.

About the time of their arrival near the latter place, the enemy had sent thither a detachment of cavalry, consisting of the 4th and 10th regiments of Hussars, to collect a contribution, for which purpose they had come from Usagre. They were charged by the 13th light dragoons, supported by the rest of the cavalry, and pursued for two leagues with the loss of three officers and nearly 300 men and horses. This affair did not cost the Allied cavalry a man.

The troops then took up cantonments at Los Santos, Zafra, La Puebla, and the adjacent villages.

On the 16th, also, General Cole arrived at Santa Martha, with the 4th division, where as an intercepted letter from General Latour Maubourg had now made it clear that Marshal Mortier was already gone, and that there was no need to advance this division farther, it was ordered to remain; and, on the 17th, Major-General Baron Alten was at Olivença from Villa Vigosa, with his light-infantry German brigade.

On the 18th, as Latour Maubourg still lingered at Llerena, Sir William Beresford determined to move upon him with the troops about Zafra, and they received orders accordingly for the following day, when it was ascertained that the enemy had marched upon Guadalcanal, and evacuated Estremadura. The intended movement, therefore, did not take place.

The troops now remained for a few days to rest in the cantonments they already occupied, Count de Penne Ville Mur's cavalry being at Llerena; and the whole of the army was abundantly supplied, without its being any longer necessary to derive assistance from the rear.

The advance had, therefore, had every effect that had been proposed from it; and no time had been lost by it with respect to Badajoz, because the chief engineer and the commandant of artillery were all the while occupied at Elvas in making preparations for the siege, and these it had not been possible yet to complete.

Meanwhile the position of the troops had prevented any farther supply from entering the fortress.

Lord Wellington had arrived at Elvas on the 20th. Sir William Beresford therefore, placing his cavalry at Zafra, Los Santos, and Villa Franca, with that of Count de Penne Ville Mur, at Llerena, the 2d division at Almendralejo, the 4th at Torre de Almendral, and the Portuguese division at Santa Martha (thus drawing all the infantry closer round Badajoz), repaired to his Lordship at Elvas, having thus in a fortnight, and certainly under no trifling difficulties, passed the Guadiana, reduced Olivença, cleared Estremadura of the enemy, obtained the disposal of all its resources, and shut in Badajoz.

Lord Wellington having arrived at Elvas from the Beira on the 21st, was joined there by Sir William Beresford, and on the 22d reconnoitred Badajoz, escorted by Brigadier-General Madden's brigade of Portuguese cavalry, and General Alten's brigade of German light infantry.

The garrison attempted to disturb this reconnoissance, and brought on a smart affair with the covering corps. It was made, notwithstanding, and Lord Wellington determined upon the immediate siege of the fortress, and the general measures for its attack.

At this juncture, Lord Wellington received intelligence which obliged him to return to the Beira, where his presence was necessary, and he gave to Sir William Beresford, therefore, detailed instructions for his guidance, as well in regard to the siege, as to the occupation of Spanish Estremadura for covering it, in conjunction with the Spanish Generals Castanos, Blake, and Ballasteros, who were to be invited to share in this operation, so important to the general cause.

1. General Castanos was to furnish three battalions for the siege, to cause a corps to occupy Merida, and Count de Penne Ville Mur, Llerena and the neighbourhood, with his advances towards Guadalcanal, and communicating on the right with General Ballasteros at Burguillos.

2. General Ballasteros, at Burguillos, to observe the passes of the Sierra Morena, the road from Fregenal and Seville, and communicating on his left with Count de Penne Ville Mur.

3. General Blake, on landing at Ayamonte, to take post at Xeres de los Caballeros.

His Lordship, also, contemplating the probability of an attempt upon the part of Marshal Soult to relieve Badajoz from the side of Andalusia (which might well be expected, since it was as precious to him to preserve, as essential to the Allies to wrest it from him), pointed out the general measures to be adopted in such a case, and considered the neighbourhood of Albuera as the point which would probably, be most favourable for assembling the troops. In this case, Count de Penne Ville Mur was to fall back by Almendralejo; General Ballasteros and General Blake by Barcarrota upon Valverde; and General Castanos to unite at once with the army of Sir William Beresford, and accompany it to Albuera.

He authorised Sir William Beresford to fight a battle, to save the siege, if he should think it expedient, or to retire over the Guadiana if he should think otherwise.

In either case, it was absolutely necessary to ensure the return of all the ordnance and siege stores to Elvas, because they were to be furnished by that fortress, and were an essential part of its own defence.

On the night of the 23d of April, the Guadiana rose eight feet of perpendicular increase. Swelled to a torrent, it carried away the bridge which had been constructed under Jerumenha, and thus the communication between the right and left banks of the river was entirely cut off, so far as regarded the passage of troops and stores or any military combination. Lord Wellington, therefore, before he set out for the Beira on the 24th, left an additional instruction with Sir William Beresford, the tenor of which was, to secure his communication with the right bank by the immediate occupation of Merida; to change the cantonments of the troops accordingly, to blockade Badajoz as closely as such a disposition allowed of, and to suspend the siege till the weather should improve, and the river again admit of a bridge being laid down for direct communication with Elvas, when the siege was to be formed and covered, as already directed.

In obedience to this order, Merida was immediately occupied in force, to ensure its possession. The cantonments of the army changed in some measure, that they might at once be drawn closer round Badajoz, and preserve their connexion with Merida; and the cavalry under Brigadier-General Long remained as before, as did also the Spanish cavalry of Count de Penne Ville Mur.

Meanwhile, all the siege stores, as well as materials for a new bridge, were preparing with the utmost diligence, and every preliminary measure taken to facilitate the forming of the siege, so soon as the weather and the river should be more favourable to the enterprise.

Sir William Beresford fixed his head-quarters at Almendralejo, centrically placed as to all the points with which it was necessary for him to communicate.

While things remained in this position, the army living (as it had invariably done since a few days after it had crossed the Guadiana) upon the resources of the country it occupied, the enemy, under General La Tour Maubourg, having taken post in some force at Guadalcanal, was in the habit of making his detachments visit the frontier towns and range over the country between them, spreading alarm among the inhabitants, and tending materially to weaken their confidence, and so to impede the collection of supplies. Colonel Colborne, therefore, was detached with his own brigade of infantry, two Spanish four-pounders, and two squadrons of cavalry; to make a tour along the frontier line, repress the inroads of the enemy, and restore the confidence of the people.

This service he executed effectually, imposing with so much ability upon the enemy, whose force was very superior to his own, that he threw him

into a state of the greatest alarm, and caused him to quit Fuente Ovejuna, La Granja, Azuaga, Valverde, and the other frontier towns, withdraw his detachments into Andalusia, and even ultimately to abandon Guadalcanal and Alanis, and fall back upon Constantina.

This movement secured the resources of a large extent of fertile country; and, after completing his tour, and fulfilling all its objects, the Colonel returned without loss to the army.

General Castanos had been in constant communication with Sir William Beresford, had disposed of Count de Penne Ville Mur's cavalry at, and in front of Llerena, and, supported by four British and Portuguese squadrons, it had co-operated with Colonel Colborne in his demonstration against the enemy's posts on the frontier.

General Ballasteros had taken post at Burguillos, and was in communication with Count Penne Ville Mur by his left; and General Blake, having arrived in the Condale de Niebla, had moved upon Xeres de los Caballeros.

All these Spanish Generals had signified, through General Castanos, their acquiescence in the plan proposed by Lord Wellington.

On the 3d of May, the weather having improved, the Guadiana having fallen, so that all its fords had again become practicable, and the bridge having been re-established, Colonel Fletcher (the chief engineer), and Major Dickson (the commanding officer of artillery), reported to Sir William Beresford that they were in readiness to commence forming the necessary depôts upon the left bank of the river, for the siege of Badajoz.

To protect this arrangement, the Hon. Major-General Stewart was put in movement on the 4th, with a brigade of six-pounders, two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry, and three brigades of infantry; and, on the morning of the 5th, invested Badajoz upon the left bank of the Guadiana, without opposition.

The formation of the depôt of siege stores immediately commenced, and was prosecuted with the greatest activity.

On the 6th the remaining infantry of the army moved, and on the 7th encamped in the woods near the place; General Castanos furnishing also a Spanish division of infantry of 2000 men under Don Carlos d'Espana, for the operations of the siege.

Brigadier-General Madden's brigade of Portuguese cavalry remained in observation at Merida. On the 7th, a part of a troop of horse-artillery, under Captain Le Fevre (three guns and a howitzer), joined the army from Lisbon, marched to Villa Franca, and were attached to the cavalry.

On the 8th, the Hon. Major-General Lumley, who had been charged with the attack upon the side of St. Christopher, invested the place on the right bank, with Brigadier-General Kemmis's brigade of the 4th division, and four Spanish four-pounders, together with the 17th regiment of Portuguese infantry and two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry from the garrison of Elvas.

The enemy attempted to oppose this movement, but without effect, being very handsomely repulsed by the 17th Portuguese regiment under Colonel Turner.

Ground was broken the same day on both banks of the river, and the operations of the siege continued with unceasing diligence. And in accordance with the instructions of Lord Wellington.

Meanwhile, Marshal Soult having assembled considerable reinforcements from Cadiz and Grenada at Seville, on the 8th, and having completed his preparations on the 9th, marched on the 10th for the purpose of raising the siege.

On the 11th, Sir William Beresford received intelligence of a considerable corps having assembled at Seville, but it did not extend to the enemy's having actually begun his march.

On the 12th, an aid-de-camp who had been sent to General Blake at Barcarota, returned with the information of Marshal Soult's being in march, and of his having reached Santa Olalla on the 11th.

The transport of stores to the left bank of the Guadiana was therefore suspended, but the operations of the siege were pressed with all possible vigour, awaiting the developement of the enemy's projects, till the 13th, when Sir William Beresford was certain that his advance had already passed the Sierra Morena and arrived at Monasterio on the 12th, and learned that his force, with the addition of Latour Maubourg's corps, might be reckoned at from 20 to 22,000 infantry, and 35,000 cavalry.

There was now very little doubt of his intention. Hitherto it might have been a movement upon the Generals Ballasteros and Blake; but this could scarcely be any longer his object, and it was evident that it was to relieve Badajoz.

Sir William Beresford, therefore, (having first summoned the town without effect), ordered the operations of the siege to cease, and all the ordnance and stores to be returned to Elvas without delay.

He then, holding everything in readiness for an immediate march, transferred his head-quarters to Valverde de Leganes, where he was met by the Generals Castanos and Blake, while the corps of the latter and of Ballasteros (having fallen back according to the proposed plan of operations) were assembling, from Barcarota, upon Almendral.

The result of this conference was the determination to assemble the Allied army near Albuera, and to give battle to the enemy.

In availing himself of the authority given him by Lord Wellington to fight a general action if he should think it expedient, Sir William Beresford was influenced by reasons of such weight as almost precluded any other course. Amongst the foremost of these were the actual state and circumstances of the Spanish army, which could no longer retire by the way it had come, and which General Blake affirmed would, if it were made to enter Portugal, desert and disperse to such a degree, that he deprecated all

retreat, and was so averse to it, that it was doubtful whether he could have been induced to cross the Guadiana; if he had persisted in remaining alone, he would have been infallibly sacrificed. At any rate, it was clear that, even if he had consented to the measure, his corps, from his own account of it, would have been no longer fit for service, and the aid of 10,000 men would thus have been lost to the operations of the campaign.

To have gone back would have been to give up the prospect of taking Badajoz, which was of such just and paramount interest with the Commander-in-chief, for which so much had already been sacrificed, and which was so important to the common cause; to abandon Estremadura, with all its resources, where such loyal assistance had been given to the army, to the vengeance of the enemy; to lay open the Alemtejo to him, and even (under the actual circumstances of its means of defence) very probably to endanger Elvas.

The first two of these consequences must have been the certain result of a retrograde movement, and in all likelihood the last two; for the enemy, who had come prepared and determined to fight, and who would have gained confidence from the retreat of the Allies, would naturally have advanced some marches into Portugal, if only to insult, and live upon, the country, having always his passage over the Guadiana, by the bridge of Badajoz, secure, and that fortress in his rear.

This irruption into Portugal must have been permitted as far as he chose to continue it, or a battle fought, after all, in the Alemtejo, where it must have been given under less favourable auspices, after a dispiriting retreat, than by advancing to court it in Estremadura.

There was no calculating, either upon the pernicious moral effect, both in Spain and Portugal, of a retreat leading to so many sacrifices, and before an enemy who was then universally considered to be inferior in numbers.

The want of subsistence, also, on the right bank of the Guadiana, not only for the British and Portuguese troops, but for the Spaniards who must have accompanied them, was a certain evil, and would have led to infinite embarrassment.

There was still another objection to a backward movement, perhaps the strongest of all; and this was the danger of it to the army, for the weather was again threatening, the precarious passage of the Guadiana, and its capricious nature, had been fully proved, and it would perhaps have been necessary, as the enemy was rapidly advancing, either to abandon the siege stores, by passing the troops without delay to the right bank; or, by waiting to cover their removal, to have run the risk of his arrival while the army was in the act of crossing, a circumstance which could scarcely have failed to be fatal.

On the other hand, the advantages of success in a battle were very great and tempting. Badajoz would be left to its fate; the flower of the enemy's Andalusian army ruined; and every future and collateral consequence of

these actual and immediate benefits, that could be looked for from the moral effect of such a victory, would necessarily follow.

The hope of success was as reasonable as it was well founded; not that Sir William Beresford suffered himself to shut his eyes to the advantage which the enemy possessed upon the score of tactic and movement, in a veteran infantry all of one nation, and accustomed to manœuvre together, aided by a superior cavalry, over an army of three different nations inferior in the latter arm; but he relied upon the often-proved valour of his British troops, their unshaken firmness, their irresistible prowess. His Portuguese, too, were in the most perfect discipline, commanded by officers in whom he could fully trust, and had already given good earnest of what might be expected from them; and he might well hope that the Spanish contingent, composed of the guards and the corps d'élite of the nation, would strain every nerve to support its honour, and to vie with their allies.

Having then maturely weighed all these considerations, he determined to give battle. His confidence in his troops was unbounded, and the result proved that he was right.

The assembly in advance having been resolved upon, General Blake engaged to unite the whole of his corps and that of Ballasteros, on the 14th, and to join the general rendezvous at Albuera on the 15th at noon, and he was directed to do so accordingly. The arc, extending from Valverde de Leganes on the right, to Albuera, and thence down the Albuera rivulet to Talavera-Real on the left, was to be considered as the line of defence, across some part of which the enemy coming from Andalusia, must of necessity pass in his way to Badajoz; and this having all along been kept in view, the Allied army forming the siege, had been so centrically disposed with relation to that arc, that it was within one march of any part of it.

Hence resulted the advantage of its being perfectly safe to leave a considerable part of the troops undisturbed upon their ground to the last, for the protection of carrying off the siege stores, continuing the close investment of the place, and keeping the garrison in the dark as to what was about to happen.

The last of these objects was very essential, to prevent the force in the town from affording any assistance to the enemy without; and it was so completely effected, that the battle of Albuera was won, before the governor was sufficiently aware of the blockading force having been withdrawn, to venture upon coming out of his gates.

On the evening of the 13th, Sir William Beresford knew that the enemy's rear guard had quitted the Sierra Morena in the morning, and had closed up to his advance between Fuente de Cantos and Villa Garcia, where the whole had halted.

Upon the morning of the 14th, the nine and six-pounder Portuguese brigades of artillery, the six-pounder brigade of German artillery, the second and Portuguese divisions, with the Portuguese brigade of Colonel Collins, and the German

light-infantry brigade of Baron Alten, were withdrawn from the camp in the wood near Badajoz, and took up one in front of Valverde; and by this, which was only a half-march, these troops were brought into communication with General Blake at Almendral, while, at the same time, they still preserved their connexion with the 4th division before Badajoz: and, as the operations of the siege had been taken by tour of divisions, and this was the day for the 4th division to be on duty, the enemy in the town were not aware of any change beyond the ordinary relief.

Upon the evening of the 14th, Marshal Soult was at Calzadilla, Zafra, and about Los Santos; his advance being thus eight leagues from any point in the line of defence, while the Allies were respectively two and four.

Here it was at his option to advance upon Badajoz by one or more of seven different roads, upon the junction of all of which he now stood.

These were

1. Nogales, Almendral, and Valverde.
2. Santa Martha, Albuera, and Valverde.
3. Santa Martha, Albuera, and Badajoz.
4. Santa Martha, Solana, and Badajoz.
5. Almendralejo, Solana, and Badajoz.
6. Almendralejo, Solana, and Talavera-Real,
7. Almendralejo, and Talavera-Real.

Albuera, therefore, the point of assembly, contemplated by Lord Wellington in his instructions, was the most eligible which could possibly be adopted; it was in the centre of all the roads by which the enemy could advance, afforded the necessary facilities for observing him, and, supposing Marshal Soult to have marched either to his right or to his left, he must have gone along an arc, while the corresponding movement of Sir William Beresford would have been made along its chord.

The assembly of the army then, having been determined at Albuera on or before noon of the 15th, the cavalry, which had concentrated at Zafra and Los Santos, had been directed to fall back gradually before the enemy, by Santa Martha, upon Albuera, taking care to observe the roads of Solana and Torre de Almendral; and Brigadier General Madden, who had ultimately been removed from Merida to Solana, was instructed, upon retiring from the latter, to place himself at Talavera-Real, and thence to look out well to his front and right flank, and communicate with the left flank posts of the army at Albuera.

Upon the morning of the 15th, the troops in the camp at Valverde advanced to the Albuera, and were placed in position about noon, as in A A of the annexed plan.

The brigade of Baron Alten, occupying the village and bridge of Albuera; the 2d division (to which the 4th division was destined on its arrival to form the 2d line) extending from the Valverde to the Badajoz road; and the line being thence prolonged by General Hamilton's Portuguese division,

and the Portuguese brigade of Colonel Collins (these troops forming their own second line), and following the contour of the ground as it falls towards the stream, and in the direction of the Cortijo of Ignacio Payano.

About three o'clock, the cavalry, which had been pushed back from Santa Martha rather more briskly than had been looked for, by that of the enemy, arrived, and upon the return of Sir William Beresford to the right, from placing the left of the line, and examining the country immediately beyond it, he found that it had already crossed the rivulet, and that the whole of the opposite bank was in possession of that of the enemy. Under the actual circumstances, this mistake once made, it was too late to repair it.

As the Spaniards under General Blake had not yet arrived, the horse artillery, the British cavalry, and that of Count de Penne Ville Mur, were stretched provisionally along the ground on the right of the Valverde road, which the former were destined to occupy, having picquets and posts of observation, well to the right in the direction of Torre de Almendral and Almendral, and the Portuguese brigade of Colonel Otway was placed on the left of the line in ff, and charged with the out-posts of the left, and the communications with General Madden at Talavera.

An officer was sent to General Blake at Almendral, to press his march, and to conduct him to the ground.

Meanwhile, it having been judged by Colonel Fletcher and Major Dickson, that the ordnance stores would be all got over the Guadiana on the night of the 15th, the Hon. Major-General Cole had received directions on that day to send a battalion of Don Carlos d'Espana's corps to occupy Olivença, and to hold himself in readiness to concentrate and march at the shortest notice: to withdraw Colonel Kemmis's brigade from St. Christophers by the ford above Badajoz, if it should be found practicable, but, if not, to send it round by Jerumenha and Olivença, as soon as the remaining ordnance and stores before St. Christophers should have all been sent off to Elvas, and to send back the 17th regiment and the cavalry to that place.

The Hon. Major-General Lumley had been previously ordered to repair to the front, to take the command of the cavalry of the army, which it was necessary should be under the orders of a Major-General, in consequence of the jarring ranks of several Brigadier-Generals of the different nations actually with it, and which required the whole to be placed under a General of whose superiority of rank no doubt could exist.

The Major-General, although at the moment commanding an infantry brigade, was an officer of cavalry, and was well calculated for the duty he was called upon to perform, as the ability with which he afterwards discharged it proved. He arrived and took the command of the cavalry, accordingly, on the morning of the 16th, about an hour before the beginning of the battle.

At this period the tête-de-pont which had been constructed in front of

Jerumenha, was in an excellent state of preparation, and, in case of any unforeseen misfortune, would have served to receive the army, and to afford it the necessary protection for repassing the Guadiana.

In the afternoon of the 15th, the enemy's infantry began to arrive (continuing to do so during the greater part of the night), and encamped in the wood upon the Santa Martha road, in B B.

It was now certain that his whole force assembled at Los Santos had moved upon Solana and Santa Martha, and that his army was *collecting in* front of Albuera.

Sir William Beresford, therefore, sent orders to the Hon. Major-General Cole before Badajoz, to march at two o'clock in the morning of the 16th, with Major Hawker's nine-pounder brigade (which had arrived a few days before from Elvas), the two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry, the 4th division and the remainder of Don Carlos d'Espana's corps, upon Albuera, by the high road from Badajoz; and to Brigadier-General Madden, to march immediately from Talavera (where his presence was no longer of any use), and join the left of the army near the Cortijo of Ignacio Payano.

Four Spanish four-pounders had now joined General Castanos, in addition to the two which had originally accompanied the army, and were all under the command of Colonel Don Josè de Miranda.

Meanwhile, the Spanish corps, under General Blake, which had little more than a league to march from Almendral, by a good road, guided by an officer sent for the purpose, and which the General had engaged should be upon its ground at noon, did not commence arriving, till eleven at night, and was not all up till three in the morning of the 16th.

These troops were disposed of as soon as it was practicable, in the ground which had been marked out for them on the right of the 2d division, and in two lines, as shown in the plan.

This was at length effected, after much delay upon the part of General Blake; and the cavalry and horse artillery, which had provisionally covered that part of the position, was withdrawn to rest and refresh, in rear of the centre.

The corps from before Badajoz, under the Hon. Major-General Cole, having marched at the ordered hour, arrived at six in the morning by the high road, and halted, and rested in column, in rear of the 2d division, to which they thus formed the 2d line, or reserve.

Brigadier-General Kemmis's brigade had not accompanied the 4th division, because the fords of the Guadiana had become impracticable, and it had been therefore sent round by Jerumenha.

The two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry, which had come with General Cole, joined Colonel Otway's brigade on the left; that of General Madden, to which they belonged, not arriving from Talavera-Real.

Don Carlos d'Espana, was sent to the right, to join the Spanish forces.

The Allied army was thus united upon the Albuera, having regulated all

its successive movements by the progressive advance of the enemy, equally avoiding a late or premature assembly, and having combined the removal of all the ordnance and siege stores with a timely arrival at the proposed position.

It now stood across the roads leading from Albuera, to Talavera-Real, Badajoz, and Valverde, as in A a d f g k; and thus posted, equally ready to give battle where he was, or to move by his right upon Valverde, or by his left upon Talavera, as circumstances might require either, Sir William Beresford observed the movements of the enemy, and waited the further developements of his projects.

The ground which the army occupied was by no means strong; it was a range of heights falling gradually into the Albuera in front, and into the Arroyo de Valdesevilla in the rear. It was of gentle undulation, and easy for cavalry throughout; but it was nevertheless, good fighting ground, and very well calculated for a position of assembly in which to meet and observe the enemy, and be guided by his subsequent measures.*

Marshal Soult, having reconnoitred the position of the Allies on the evening of the 15th, determined to attack their right, which ground afforded scope for using his superior cavalry to advantage, and which he expected to find but weakly occupied, because the Spanish infantry not having arrived when he made his reconnoissance, there had been an appearance of very few troops.

Here, therefore, he thought to roll up the army by its right flank, establishing himself upon the height Z Z, and thence penetrating to the Valverde road, to take the position in reverse, place himself upon its communications, and pursue his success to the utmost that such an advantage would have put in his power.

This was undoubtedly the most decisive mode of bringing matters to a conclusion; and, as he had received information that one British division still remained before Badajoz, he was naturally desirous to attack before it should have joined, and resolved to do so the instant his infantry should have all arrived, notwithstanding its fatigue, part of it having marched eight leagues (or 32 English miles), and not reaching the camp till the middle of the night.

The ground which he encamped upon in B B was covered with wood, which afforded great facility for making his real assembly for attack, particularly on his extreme left, where it was thick, and extended down to the banks of the Feria, and where an abrupt shoulder of the Tongue between the fork of that rivulet and the Albuera, formed a hollow V, capable of holding a large body of troops, and concealing them from any part of the opposite heights. In this hollow, then, he had, early in the morning of the 16th, formed the élite of his infantry in three columns of attack, and a large

* Memorandum.—The Generals, principal Officers, and Regiments of the Allied army actually on the ground during the battle, were as in Appendix No. 4.

proportion of his cavalry and artillery, 44 and 45; and, having completed his preparations, the remainder of his infantry in three columns, 1 1, and of his cavalry and artillery 2 2 and 3 3, moved out of the wood, and directed themselves between eight and nine in the morning upon the bridge and village of Albuera. When this force had proceeded so far as to give him reason for supposing that the principal attention of his antagonist would be drawn to the left and centre, two of the three columns of infantry, *II*, rapidly countermarched, and hastened back to his left to form the reserve of his real attack, while part of the calvary, 3 3, turned to its left, crossed the Albuera, and proceeding up its left bank at a gallop, came round the right flank of the Allies.

The third column of infantry, 2 2, with the artillery, continued its march, and commenced a sharp cannonade and tiraillade upon the bridge and village of Albuera, and the opposite bank of the stream, in front of and to the flank of it; while the cavalry, proceeding farther on, took post at u, near the Cortijo de Campanillo, in observation and menace of the Portuguese cavalry in f f.

Meanwhile, the artillery, cavalry, and three columns of infantry, which had been prepared upon the enemy's left, moved from the ground where they had been formed in V, as soon as the troops at the bridges and village were warmly engaged, and advanced with great rapidity to Y, where the artillery opened its fire upon the right of the Allies; while the infantry formed in 7 7 for the attack of Z Z, the two columns which had countermarched from *II* forming the reserve in 6 6, and part of the cavalry remaining with these columns to co-operate in their attack, the rest joined that which had already crossed from 3 3, and stretched round to their left in S S, to penetrate into the rear of the right of the position.

While these arrangements were going on, Sir William Beresford, observing the troops which were in march upon Albuera, judged that they were not in sufficient strength to be the sole or principal attack, penetrated the enemy's design, and saw that this was either a feint altogether, or that the movement upon the village would be combined with one upon his right.

* Under this conviction he directed General Blake to form all his first line, and the right of his second, to his right, and so occupy Z Z, and he put the second division from the centre in movement to the right to support him, and bringing the Portuguese division and the brigade of Colonel Collins from the left, formed them upon the ground quitted by the right of the second division near the Valverde road, in contiguous close column of battalions in t t, instructing General Hamilton (while he thus remained in readiness to move in whatever direction he might ultimately be ordered) to

* In the original impression of this narrative this passage was misprinted, and the words *first* and *second* were accidentally reversed. This error was adopted in Colonel Napier's account of the battle; who, nevertheless, does not acknowledge his having ever seen this work of Sir B. D'Urban.

advance a brigade near the village for the support of Baron Alten, and to take care that *that* post was maintained.

This division was thus at once a support to the centre and the right, could be rendered to the left, if any unforeseen exigency should demand it, and secured against all accidents the important hill upon the Valverde road in the centre, which commanded, and was the key of, the whole position.

At the same time he moved the fourth division, which was in column, at 1 d, to 3 d, and placed it obliquely in rear of the right. Here it stood secure upon strong ground, forming a powerful reserve for the right and centre, covering the right flank and Valverde road, and holding out an appui to his inferior cavalry, from the protection of which that of the enemy, though more then double in number, could never drive it. In the event, this division answered every purpose that Sir William Beresford expected from it when he posted it so ably.

Finally, he placed the British and Spanish cavalry (under the Hon. Major-General Lumley) in advance of the fourth division on the right, upon the plain in (e k), within the little channel formed by the Arroyo de Valdesevilla. Here it was disposable to move towards the position by its left, or to stretch along the Valverde road by its right; and Sir William Beresford, aware of its numerical inferiority to that of the enemy, as well as of the infinite importance of preserving it entire for emergencies, instructed General Lumley to have these considerations in view, and to adventure nothing against the enemy which might lead to a wide movement, to separating his force, or to removing him from the appui of the fourth division; but at the same time to watch the enemy's movements, and act according to his own discretion for the main object of impeding his attempts to penetrate to the Valverde road, and double round the rear of the position.

The Portuguese cavalry remained on the left in f f, in observation of the flank and of the French cavalry in u; and the 13th light dragoons in the hollow h h, watched the cavalry which the enemy had opposite the village.

The artillery was disposed of in just proportions to support the different points, and the horse-artillery of Captain Le Fever, accompanied the cavalry.

These dispositions were promptly and precisely carried into effect, with the exception of that of General Blake, whose delay in executing it had very nearly led to the most fatal consequences; for so much time was lost, that instead of being prepared upon the ground he was to hold, his troops had scarcely placed themselves there when the enemy fell upon them.*

* Even then, late as it was, Sir William Beresford was obliged to move and post them in person, no orders having been sent to that effect by General Blake, who, impressed with an idea that the real attack was upon the centre, took upon himself to delay the execution of the first order he received to front to his right, and sent to Sir William Beresford to say so; thus losing nearly half-an-hour of time that was very precious.

About nine o'clock, the enemy in 77 moved rapidly from Y under a very heavy fire of artillery, and attacked the Spanish corps upon Z Z.

The Spaniards made a gallant and obstinate resistance, but were at length obliged to yield their ground, upon which the enemy took post.*

This height was of great importance, inasmuch as it commanded the right of the position; and the 2d division, under the Hon. Major-General Stewart, which was now rapidly advancing to support the Spaniards, and which arrived just as they had been forced to abandon it, was immediately ordered by Sir William Beresford, to attack and recover it, the Spaniards in their turn supporting. This attack was made in echellon of brigades from the right, and led by General Stewart with equal intrepidity and precision.

There fell at this time a heavy rain, which combining with the smoke of the firing, caused such a darkness, that it was impossible to distinguish any object, even at a few paces' distance. Favoured by this, as the 1st brigade, under Colonel Colborne, fell upon the enemy with the bayonet and were driving him before them, some squadrons of Polish lancers and hussars, which had lodged themselves perceived behind the knoll x, charged the brigade in the rear, and many of these gallant soldiers perished.

The 31st regiment, which was on the left of the brigade, commanded by Major L'Estrange, extricated itself from the confusion, and continued the attack alone, and with the best effect, unshaken by the disaster of the other regiments.

The wind at this moment blowing aside the smoke and rain, General Lumley in the plain, perceived the enterprise of the enemy, and instantly detached two squadrons of the 4th dragoons led by Lieutenant Colonel

* The author of the foregoing Strictures conceives that Sir Benjamin D'Urban, though his account agrees with the general impression of the army, is incorrect on this point. The mistake has originated in confounding the lower falls of the heights on the right with the upper heights and original position. The Spanish line was still unbroken, and Lord Beresford was in its rear encouraging the men with his presence, long after events, which are mentioned above as occurring subsequently to this supposed repulse of the Spaniards, had taken place. It was in the rear of the Spanish, and in front of the British line, that Lord Beresford was attacked by the lancer, which must have happened after the charge on Colborne's brigade. Again, it was subsequent to that charge, that the British line fired on the Spanish. After having sent Lieut.-Col. Robert Arbuthnot to the rear of the British line to stop this firing, the Marshal went to the right of the position, that is, to the angle of the hill, where was the original right of both lines. No enemy was then there, nor any appearance of any having been there. The Spaniards were standing in columns of battalions; but, as to what had occurred at this point, over which Colborne's brigade had certainly passed, I cannot be certain, having been, till this time, with the Marshal more to the left. But most certainly the line on the top of these heights was not approached by the enemy, unless it were, on the lower heights to the right, nearer than the point where he halted at the foot of them.

Leighton, and directed by the Hon. Colonel de Grey, and two squadrons of Spanish Cavalry, under Count de Penne Ville Mur, to the spot. These troops fell upon the lancers and hussars with so much fury, that the greater part of them were cut to pieces, and then returned without delay to the cavalry in the plain.

The 3d brigade of the 2d division, under Major-General Hoghton, following the first, with equal intrepidity, and better fortune, deployed very judiciously and with admirable precision, under cover of the lower falls of the heights, moved on in line to the attack, and, supported and followed by the 2d brigade under the Hon. Colonel Abercromby, and the Spaniards under the Generals Ballasteros and Zayas, carried all before it, gained the contested ground, and took post upon it.

In this glorious exploit, General Hoghton fell, pierced with bullets, having still continued to lead the troops after receiving several wounds, and cheering them to the charge with his last breath. Lieutenant-Colonel Duckworth was also killed at this period of the battle, at the head of the first battalion of the 48th.

Scarcely had Sir William Beresford (who had conducted this attack of the 3d brigade in person) placed the troops and artillery to the best advantage upon the ground they had gained, when the enemy, who had taken breath for a moment under the fire of his artillery from Y, and reinforced himself from his columns of reserve in 66, again moved upon the height ZZ, in three columns, from 4 to 5000 men in each, and here commenced the most desperate and sanguinary conflict of infantry that perhaps had ever been witnessed. It was an incessant fire of musquetry, very often at the distance of twenty paces, only interrupted at intervals, upon the part of the British, by partial charges of the bayonet. The French, treble in number, fought in their best manner, and made incredible efforts, but in vain; nothing could shake or overcome the troops who opposed them; and this period of the battle was fruitful beyond all former example, in traits of devoted heroism and contempt of death.

Here the 29th and 48th regiments were conspicuous for their invincible steadiness, and the immense number of the enemy's dead in their front showed how well their prowess was directed; and here the 57th regiment, commanded by Colonel Inglis, had their Colonel and twenty-two, out of twenty-four, officers killed or wounded, and here, after the battle was won, their dead were found (as described in Sir William Beresford's despatch) lying in the ranks as they fought, and with all their wounds before.

The Hon. General Stewart received two wounds, but would not quit the field; and from the General to the Soldier, all were animated with the same feeling, and all resolved to conquer or to fall.

The heavy loss sustained by the right brigade, and the destructive struggle now continuing, had so diminished the force of the 2d division, that the enemy was enabled to lodge one of his columns which he had constantly fed

from his reserves, rather forwarder than he had hitherto done upon the right of the contested ground, and Sir William Beresford despatched orders to the Hon. General Cole to send his left brigade to this point.* The order had been anticipated, for Colonel Hardinge† had perceived the necessity, and, with his characteristic promptness and decision, had hastened to point it out to General Cole, who instantly directed the Fusileer brigade under Sir William Myers, and the battalion of the Loyal Lusitanian legion commanded by Col. Hawkshaw, upon this duty.

These troops move to their point with rapidity and in the most perfect order: and, in a few minutes, the greater part of the French column which had required their presence, perished under their fire.

In this glorious and successful achievement they suffered, however, severely: the Hon. General Cole (who had, himself, led the Fusileers to the attack), and the Colonels Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshaw, were wounded, and Sir William Myers killed.

The enemy now, foiled in his attempts to gain the long-disputed height ZZ, and pushed back upon Y from whence he had originally attacked, maintained himself there, and the battle continued upon this point with unabated fury.

The 2d brigade of the second division had behaved throughout the day with the most distinguished prowess: the 28th, 34th, and 39th regiments, vied with each other in discipline and valour, and executed various movements under the hottest fire, with admirable precision. The conduct and able dispositions of the Hon. Colonel Abercromby were worthy the renown of his father.

Colonel Collins' Portuguese brigade having arrived from the centre to support the 2d brigade, suffered considerably, and its commander, an officer of the highest promise, lost his leg by a cannon shot.

The Spanish four-pounders under Colonel Don Jose de Miranda, were well served.

The allied artillery under Major Dickson, was directed with consummate ability by that excellent officer and all under his orders.

Meanwhile, the enemy had not ceased to continue a vigorous attack upon the left of the Allies at the bridge and village of Albuera, (which had been ably resisted throughout the day by the German light brigade, under Baron Alten, and the 5th Caçadores, under Lieutenant-Colonel M'Creagh, supported by the Portuguese brigade of Brigadier-General Campbell), while at the same time, his superior cavalry on the right had made various efforts to

* The time here referred to is that when Lord Beresford, as related in the foregoing Strictures (page 167), sent Lieut.-Col. Robert Arbuthnot to bring up a brigade of General Hamilton's division; Sir Benjamin D'Urban has mistaken this for a brigade of Sir Lumley Cole's. The Marshal never gave orders for any part of the latter division to move.

† Deputy Quarter-Master-General of the Portuguese army.

envelope, and penetrate by, that flank. In all of these he failed, through the prompt and judicious measures of the Hon. Major-General Lumley, who, manœuvring with fifteen squadrons against twenty-six, constantly found means, by availing himself of the trifling obstacle of the Arroyo de Valdesevilla, and leaning upon the 4th division, to baffle his endeavours, moving down upon him, whenever he showed a disposition to pass the Arroyo, with so determined a countenance, that, although he often made the attempt, he as often abandoned it, and he was deterred from stretching very widely round by his left towards the Valverde road and the baggage, by the apprehension that, if he withdrew from the front of the cavalry and the 4th division, these corps would throw themselves, perhaps with fatal effect, upon the left flank of his infantry engaged on the heights.

When General Cole moved the Fusileer brigade to the assistance of the 2d division, he had advanced the 4th division to 4 d, and then closed the Portuguese brigade nearer to the heights to preserve the connexion; at this moment, some squadrons from the right of the French cavalry made an attempt upon the Portuguese brigade, and were received by Colonel Harvey with the most perfect coolness, and such a well-directed fire given at about forty paces, that they dispersed, and fled in all directions.

General Lumley advancing as the 4th division advanced, the French cavalry fell back as their infantry gave ground to take post in Y.

Sir William Beresford now saw that the moment for deciding the fortune of the day was arrived. The whole of the enemy was before him on the right; to conquer him there, then, was victory, and he determined to fall upon him with the flower of his force united.

To this end, he ordered the left of the Spanish front line (which still remained in its original ground, and had not been engaged), to occupy the village of Albuera, from whence he called Baron Alten to support the left, in turning the enemy's right in P P. He directed General Hamilton to close up the whole of the Portuguese division to the rear of the centre of this attack, and the 2d division thus reinforced, were to move straight upon the enemy in Y; while General Lumley, with the cavalry, combining with the Fusileer brigade and the Portuguese brigade of the 4th division united, turned his left flank in w.

The orders for this simultaneous movement were immediately given, and promptly obeyed. The troops all moved accordingly, and the enemy turned by both flanks, and perceiving the close column of General Hamilton advancing in support of the attack upon his centre, made all possible haste to send back his reserve and artillery to D D, and then, unable to make any farther effort, his troops at Y fled in the greatest confusion over the Albuera, and took refuge under that protection.

They were bayoneted to the edge of the stream by the British infantry, and there Sir William Beresford recalled the troops from farther pursuit,

which their fatigue, their loss, and the superior cavalry of the enemy, combined to forbid.

Baron Alten hastened to re-occupy Albuera, and the troops of the Portuguese division which were for the most part fresh and untouched, were immediately placed in position C C. Those who had been engaged were formed in columns of reserve in the rear; the cavalry were stretched well round to the right, the necessary posts and picquets established, and every thing secured.

The wounded were removed from the immediate field of battle, the soldiers cooked, got an additional ration of spirits, and their ammunition was completed.

The battle, which had begun at nine, ceased at a little after two, and all these arrangements were completed by four.*

The enemy, in abandoning the field of battle, left upon the ground 2500 dead, and more than 1000 so badly wounded as to be unable to stir from the spot where they had fallen. The day cost him two Generals of division killed, five badly wounded, (among the latter, General Gazan, the chief of the staff), several Generals of inferior rank, an immense proportion of superior and other officers, and 10,000 of his best troops hors de combat.

The loss of the Allies was severe; such a victory could not be purchased cheaply, but it amounted to little more than half that of the French.

Thus ended the battle of Albuera, which in point of persevering effort on the one part, and unyielding resistance on the other, was without parallel in the history of the Peninsular, or, perhaps, of any other war.

Badajoz was the stake, and both armies contended for it with an obstinacy proportioned to its importance and its interest. All ranks of the Allied army did their duty well. The prowess and steady valour of the soldiers were beyond any eulogium. The victory was desperately fought for, and brilliantly achieved.

The Spanish troops behaved with great steadiness and bravery; and the Generals Ballasteros, Zayas, Don Carlos d'Espana, and the Count de Penne Ville Mur, the Spanish and Walloon guards, and the regiment of Ireland, were particularly distinguished.

The Portuguese troops maintained the character they had gained at Buzaco. The 5th regiment of the line, the 5th Caçadores, the Lusitanian legion, the 11th and 23d regiments, were conspicuous, as were indeed all who came in contact with the enemy.

Upon no former occasion had the German and British troops displayed a more heroic intrepidity. All had distinguished themselves in proportion to

* A report appears to have been for some time in circulation, that, at one period of the battle of Albuera, orders had been given by Sir William Beresford for a retreat. The above, which is a faithful statement of what passed, and of the orders actually issued, as well as of the motives and circumstances by which they were successively dictated, will suffice to show that this report was unfounded.

the occasion which had been offered to them. Sir William Beresford named in his despatch and order of the day* those whose acts he had witnessed, or been informed of; but, in such a battle, many gallant deeds are necessarily lost in the mass, and unnoticed because unknown.

Marshal Soult's conduct was worthy of his high reputation; and Sir William Beresford, whose dispositions through the whole of this arduous day were equally prompt and judicious, eminently distinguished himself as an able captain and a gallant soldier.

The enemy (as was invariably the case in every battle of the war) was stronger in the field than any previous intelligence had rated him.

He had fifty-two pieces of artillery, some of them twelve-pounders; thirty-four squadrons of cavalry, amounting to 4,500 swords; and 26,000 infantry.

The Allied army had thirty-four pieces of artillery, twenty squadrons of cavalry, but they were weak, only nine of them British, and in all did not amount to 2,000 swords.

British - - -	7,000	
Portuguese - -	10,000	27,000 infantry.
Spanish - - -	10,000	

The artillery of the enemy was superior in number, and some of it in weight. He had a great advantage in the tactic and facility of movement of his veteran infantry, all of one nation, and accustomed to manœuvre together; and his cavalry, which was out of all manner of numerical proportion to that of the Allies, although it made little impression during the battle, undoubtedly saved him after it.

It was a maxim of the great Duke of Berwick, that with an inferior cavalry, in a cavalry country, you may beat your enemy, but you cannot effect his destruction. This was exemplified at Albuera.

On the 17th, the armies remained in presence; the enemy in his position B B occupying D D strongly, and showing a large force of cavalry in front, and to the left of Albuera.

The Allied army stood in C C; and an officer having been despatched by Sir William Beresford immediately after the battle, to meet Brigadier-General Kemmis's brigade of the 4th division, found him at Olivença (it had required the utmost exertion to arrive so far), from whence he reached the camp at a little after day-break, and joined the 4th division in reserve to the troops at Z and Y.

The whole of the 2d division was now enabled to return to its old ground upon the left of the Valverde road. The general order (Appendix, No. II.) was issued by Sir William Beresford to the army.

On the 18th, the enemy (who had been occupied the preceding day in

* See Appendix, Nos. I. and III.

sending to the rear such wounded as could bear removal) began his retreat upon Andalusia, by the road of Almendralejo, leaving a considerable number of wounded in his camp, and having buried in the ditches many who had been brought off from the field in the earlier part of the battle, and who had since died.

This movement he performed under the protection of his numerous cavalry, with which, and a strong rear guard of infantry, Marshal Soult, took a position for the night, covering the retreat at Solana.

Thus, having lost the battle of Albuera, he was constrained to abandon Badajoz to its fate. Its preservation had been very near his heart; he had drained the armies of Andalusia, to assemble a chosen force, and having done so, he had marched to relieve it with incredible diligence, and with a confidence that did not allow him a doubt of success.

He had promised the troops, before he left Seville, that he would annihilate the besieging army; and he attacked it accordingly as soon as he had it before him.

But he failed in all his objects; the enemy he had effected to despise, baffled and defeated him; and, after losing the flower of his army, he was compelled to return upon his steps, without having seen, or had the slightest communication with, the fortress he had sacrificed so much to save.

Sir William Beresford, on the contrary, had succeeded in all the views which had influenced him to advance and give battle. He had defeated the enemy, and forced him to retreat from whence he came, without effecting his purpose. He had saved the siege of Badajoz, where not even a fascine was lost, into which not a supply of any kind had been thrown, and against which the suspended operations might immediately recommence.

He had recovered Estremadura, preserved the Alemtejo, and perhaps Elvas; and lastly, (though by no means the least advantage), he had increased the renown of the Allied arms and the confidence of their cause, and greatly diminished those of the French.

The Allied cavalry followed the enemy's rear guard, and observed his movements; and Count de Penne Ville Mur's advance under Lieutenant-Colonel Soto, succeeded in cutting off a part of his 22d chasseurs-a-cheval, and took the Lieutenant-Colonel a prisoner.

With a cavalry so inferior, Sir William Beresford could have no well-founded hope of striking any decisive blow against the retreating army in the country of plains in which it was now marching. His object too was gained; he had the power of shutting up Badajoz again, and wished to avail himself of it. Uninformed moreover, as he yet was, of the full extent of the enemy's loss, he was cautious how he risked the important advantages already secured, by an adventure of which he could not foresee the issue. He had, besides, no longer the power of getting accurate intelligence from the rear of the enemy's army, and therefore was uncertain as to any support which might be advancing to him from Andalusia.

Added to all this the troops required repose; the wounded care; and any fatigue or movement, for which there was no very good cause, was on all accounts to be avoided. Major-General Hamilton was ordered to march in the evening, with the Portuguese division, a brigade of six-pounders, and some cavalry, to reinvest Badajoz, on the left bank of the river, and no other change was made in the position of the rest of the infantry than moving Baron Alten's brigade into the wood upon the Almendralejo road, to receive and sustain the cavalry, should there be occasion.

The cavalry remained for the night at Corte Peleas, with its advances near Solana, and at Santa Martha.

On the 19th, at day-break, General Hamilton reinvested Badajoz on the south bank of the Guadiana. Thus the operations against Marshal Soult had only set the garrison at liberty for three days, during the greater part of the first of which they were ignorant of their being so.

They had only had time to fill up lightly a part of the trenches; and none of the siege stores had been left in their power.

On this day Lord Wellington arrived at Elvas, and was in communication with Sir William Beresford. His Lordship did not think it expedient to press the pursuit of the enemy; recommended much caution in whatever advance might be ultimately made; and was unwilling that the troops should be far removed from their main object, the siege of Badajoz.

The 2d and 4th divisions were closed up to the German light infantry, and also encamped in the wood on the right bank of Albuera.

On the 20th the enemy's rear guard quitted Solana, and continued its retreat to Azeuchal and Fuente del Maestre. The cavalry followed his movements. Lord Wellington came from Elvas to Albuera, rode over the field of battle, and expressed his satisfaction at what had been achieved.

He returned to Elvas in the evening, proposing to continue the siege of Badajoz immediately; and, having found it already invested on the south side of the river by General Hamilton with the Portuguese division, determined to invest it also on the north, with the 3d division, which, with the 7th, he had brought from the army of the Beira.

The corps now in the wood of Albuera was ordered to move forward and take up the cantonments it had occupied before the siege of Badajoz and advance of Marshal Soult, where it might repose, and profit with facility by the resources of the country.

In the evening an intercepted letter was brought in from General Gazan to Marshal Soult. This General (who was the chief of the staff) had been wounded in the battle, and had been charged with the column of wounded going to the rear.

He gave a melancholy account of their situation, stated them to amount to 5000, and to have but three surgeons with them, so that few of them had yet the first dressing applied to their wounds.

The general order (Appendix, No. III.) was issued by Sir William Beresford to the army.

On the 21st the corps in the wood at Albuera moved upon Solana. The cavalry were already in Azeuchal and Almendralejo, and the enemy's rear guard in Fuente del Maestre and Villa Franca.

On the 22d Sir William Beresford's head-quarters were at Almendralejo, where he found from three to four hundred of the enemy's wounded.

On the 23d the enemy quitted Villa Franca and Fuente del Maestre, and retired upon Usagre; and, on the morning of the 25th, General Lumley attacked his cavalry at the entrance of that town; and a brilliant charge of the 3d dragoon guards, supported by the 4th dragoons, combined with a flank attack by the Portuguese brigade of General Madden, nearly destroyed two of his regiments, many of whom were killed, and many officers, men, and horses, taken.

After this affair he retired to Llerena, without seeking his revenge; and Sir William Beresford having placed the different corps in the cantonments which they had occupied previous to forming the siege of Badajoz and the advance of Marshal Soult, and having given all the necessary instructions for their arrangement and security,* repaired to Elvas to join Lord Wellington, who had now assumed in person the conduct of affairs in the south, and was proceeding with the siege of Badajoz.

From the foregoing narrative it will have been seen that the right corps of the Allied army, under Field-Marshal Sir William Beresford, during the campaign of 1811, had the good fortune to succeed in all its enterprises, and to execute without failure all its instructions, notwithstanding that, particularly in Estremadura, its force, (although, as has been before observed, as strong as Lord Wellington could afford to make it), might well be considered small, relatively to its object, and its means of every kind generally limited and inadequate.

It cleared the Alemtejo of the enemy, chastised his rear guard, and recovered Campo-Mayor.

It crossed the Guadiana in the face of Marshal Mortier; and with means of passage so insufficient, that the enterprise appeared impracticable to those who observed its progress.

It reduced Olivença, established itself in Spanish Estremadura, and, notwithstanding that it received scarcely any supplies from the rear, continued its operations, subsisting upon the resources of the country, and that with so much good order and conciliation, as to cause no ill feeling among the people, who, on the contrary, willingly brought in every sort of supply.

It rescued the corps of Ballasteros, and again severely punished the enemy's cavalry at Los Santos. It cleared the province of the French

* The concerns of the Portuguese army imperiously required the presence of its Commander-in-Chief at the head-quarters, and General Hill, (in consequence of whose absence Sir William Beresford had taken charge of the right corps), had now returned to Portugal, and was on his way to resume his command.

troops; occupied and held it, with the disposal of its resources, up to the Sierra Morena; and then investing Badajoz, notwithstanding many difficulties, formed the siege, and proceeded with it according to Lord Wellington's instructions.

When, at this period, Marshal Soult advanced in force to relieve the fortress, the right corps (being at once the besieging and the covering army) was obliged to suspend the operations of the siege, to advance and give battle to the enemy; and, in the doing so, it saved all the ordnance and siege stores, and so combined its movements, that it only raised the investment of Badajoz on the morning of the battle of Albuera, which was already won before the garrison was aware of its being at liberty, while, at the same time, Marshal Soult, in attacking the Allies, thought the investing division still occupied before the place.

Joined by the Spanish corps of General Blake, it gained this battle against a corps d'élite of the enemy, superior in cavalry and artillery, and led by one of his most able Generals, who was there defeated with the loss of 10,000 of the flower of his troops, foiled in his object, and compelled to retrace his steps and retreat from whence he came, the cavalry of his rear-guard again suffering a signal disaster.

B. D'URBAN,

Quarter-Master-General of the Right Corps.

APPENDIX.

(No. I.)

My Lord, *Albuera, 18th May*, 1811.

I have infinite satisfaction in communicating to your Lordship, that the Allied army united here under my orders, obtained on the 16th instant, after a most sanguinary contest, a complete victory over that of the enemy commanded by Marshal Soult, and I shall proceed to relate to your Lordship the circumstances.

In a former report, I have informed your Lordship of the advance of Marshal Soult from Seville; and I had, in consequence, judged it wise entirely to raise the siege of Badajoz, and prepare to meet him with our united forces, rather than, by looking to two objects at once, to risk the loss of both, and which was conformable to your Lordship's instructions.

Marshal Soult, it appears, had been long straining every nerve to collect a force which he thought fully sufficient to his object for the relief of Badajoz, and, for this purpose, he had drawn considerable numbers from the corps of Marshal Victor and General Sebastiana, and also, I believe, from the French army of the centre. Having thus completed his preparations, he marched from Seville on the 10th instant, with a corps then estimated at 15 or 16,000 men, and was joined, on descending into Estremadura, by the corps under General La Tour Maubourg, stated to be 5000 men. His Excellency General Blake, as soon as he learnt the advance of Marshal Soult, in strict conformity to the plan proposed by your Lordship, proceeded to form his junction with the corps under my orders, and arrived at Valverde in person on the 14th instant, where, having consulted with his Excellency and General Castanos, it was determined to meet the enemy and to give them battle.

To Marshal-General, the Lord Viscount Wellington, &c. &c. &c.

On finding the determination of the enemy to relieve Badajoz, I had broken up from before that place, and marched the infantry to the position in front of Valverde, except the division of the Hon. Major-General Cole, which, with 2000 Spanish troops, I left to cover the removal of our stores.

The cavalry, which had, according to orders, fallen back as the enemy advanced, was joined at Santa Martha by the cavalry of General Blake;

that of General Castanos, under the Count de Penne Ville Mur, had been always with it.

As remaining at Valverde, though a stronger position, left Badajoz entirely open, I determined to take up a position (such as could be got in this widely open country) at this place, thus standing directly between the enemy and Badajoz.

The army was therefore assembled here on the 15th instant. The corps of General Blake, though making a forced march to effect it, only joined in the night, and could not be placed in its position till the morning of the 16th, when General Cole's division, with the Spanish brigade under Don Carlos d'Espana, also joined, and a little before the commencement of the action. Our cavalry had been forced on the morning of the 15th to retire from Santa Martha, and joined here. In the afternoon of that day, the enemy appeared in front of us. The next morning, our disposition for receiving the enemy was made, being formed in two lines, nearly parallel to the river Albuera, on the ridge of the gradual ascent rising from that river, and covering the roads to Badajoz and Valverde; though your Lordship is aware that the whole face of this country is every where passable for all arms. General Blake's corps was on the right in two lines; its left, on the Valverde road, joined the right of Major-General the Hon. William Stewart's division, the left of which reached the Badajoz road, where commenced the right of Major-General Hamilton's division, which closed the left of the line; General Cole's division, with one brigade of General Hamilton's, formed the second line of the British and Portuguese army.

The enemy on the morning of the 16th, did not long delay his attack; at eight o'clock he was observed to be in movement, and his cavalry were seen passing the rivulet of Albuera considerably above our right, and shortly after, he marched out of the wood opposite to us a strong force of cavalry, and three heavy columns of infantry, pointing them to our front, as if to attack the village and bridge of Albuera. During this time, under cover of his vastly superior cavalry, he was filing the principal body of his infantry over the river beyond our right; and it was not long before his intention appeared to be to turn us by that flank, and cut us off from Valverde. Major-General Cole's division was therefore ordered to form an oblique line to the rear of our right, with its own right thrown back; and the intention of the enemy to attack our right becoming evident, I requested General Blake to form part of his first line, and all his second, to that front, which was done. The enemy commenced his attack at nine o'clock, not ceasing, at the same time, to menace our left; and, after a strong and gallant resistance by the Spanish troops, he gained the heights upon which they had been formed. Meanwhile, the division of the Hon. Major-General William Stewart had been brought up to support them, and that of Major-General Hamilton brought to the left of the Spanish line, and formed in contiguous close columns of battalions, to be moveable in any direction. The Por-

tuguese brigade of cavalry, under Brigadier-General Otway, remained at some distance on the left of this, to check any attempt of the enemy below the village.

As the heights the enemy had gained, raked, and entirely commanded, our whole position, it became necessary to make every effort to retake and maintain them; and a noble one was made by the division of General Stewart, headed by that gallant officer. Nearly at the beginning of the enemy's attack a heavy storm of rain came on, which, with the smoke from the firing, rendered it impossible to discern anything distinctly. This, with the nature of the ground, had been extremely favourable to the enemy in forming his columns, and in his subsequent attack. The right brigade of General Stewart's division, under Lieutenant-Colonel Colborne, first came into action, and behaved in the most gallant manner; and, finding that the enemy's column could not be shaken by fire, proceeded to attack it with the bayonet, and while in the act of charging a body of Polish lancers (cavalry), which the thickness of the atmosphere and the nature of the ground had concealed (and which was, besides, mistaken by those of the brigade, when discovered, for Spanish cavalry, and therefore not fired upon), turned it; and, it being thus attacked unexpectedly in the rear, was unfortunately broken, and suffered immensely. The 31st regiment, being the left one of the brigade, alone escaped this charge, and, under the command of Major L'Estrange, kept its ground until the arrival of the 3d brigade, under Major-General Hoghton. The conduct of this brigade was most conspicuously gallant; and that of the 2d brigade, under the command of the Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel Abercromby, was not less so. Major-General Hoghton, cheering on his brigade to the charge, fell pierced with wounds. Though the enemy's principal attack was on this point of the right, he also made a continual attempt against that part of our original front at the village and bridge, which were defended in the most gallant manner by Major-General Baron Alten, and the light infantry brigade of the German Legion, whose conduct was in every point of view conspicuously good. This point now formed our left, and Major-General Hamilton's division had been brought up there, and he was left to direct the defence of that point, whilst the enemy's attack continued on our right, a considerable proportion of the Spanish troops supporting the defence of this place. The enemy's cavalry, on his infantry attempting to force our right, had endeavoured to turn it, but by the able manœuvres of Major-General the Hon. William Lumley, commanding the Allied cavalry, though vastly inferior to that of the enemy in number, his endeavours were foiled. Major-General Cole, seeing the principal attack of the enemy, very judiciously bringing up his left a little, marched in line to attack the enemy's left, and arrived most opportunely to contribute, with the charges of the brigades of General Stewart's division, to force the enemy to abandon his situation, and retire precipitately, and to take refuge under his reserve. Here the Fusileer brigade particularly distinguished itself. He was pursued by the Allies to a

considerable distance, and, as far as I thought it prudent, with his immense superiority of cavalry, and I contented myself with seeing him driven across the Albuera.

I have every reason to speak most favourably of the manner in which our artillery was served and fought; and Major Hartman, commanding the British, and Major Dickson, commanding the Portuguese, and the officers and men, are entitled to my thanks. The four guns of the horse-artillery, commanded by Captain Lefevre, did great execution on the enemy's cavalry, and one brigade of Spanish artillery (the only one in the field), I saw equally gallantly and well served. We lost, in the misfortune which occurred to the brigade commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Colborne (who General Stewart reports to have acted, and was then acting, in a most noble manner, leading on the brigade in admirable order), one howitzer, which the enemy, before the arrival of the gallant General Hoghton's brigade, had time to carry off with him, and 2 or 300 prisoners of that brigade. After he had been beaten from this his principal attack, he still continued that near the village, on which he never could make any impression, or cross the rivulet, though I had been obliged to bring a very great proportion of the troops from it to support the principal point of attack; but the enemy, on seeing his main attack defeated, relaxed in his attempts there also. The Portuguese division of Major-General Hamilton in every instance evinced the utmost steadiness and courage, and manœuvred equally well with the British. Brigadier-General Harvey's Portuguese brigade, belonging to General Cole's division, had an opportunity of distinguishing itself, when marching in line across the plain, by repulsing, with the utmost steadiness, a charge of the enemy's cavalry.

It is impossible to enumerate every instance of discipline and valour shown on this severely contested day; but never were troops that more valiantly or more gloriously maintained the honour of their respective countries. I have not been able to particularize the Spanish divisions, brigades, or regiments, that were particularly engaged, because I am not acquainted with their denominations or names; but I have great pleasure in saying that their behaviour was most gallant and honourable; and though, from the superior number and weight of the enemy's force, that part of them that were in the position attacked, were obliged to cede the ground, it was after a gallant resistance; and they continued in good order to support their allies; and I doubt not His Excellency General Blake will do ample justice on this head, by making honourable mention of the deserving.

The battle commenced at nine o'clock, and continued without interruption till two in the afternoon, when the enemy having been driven over the Albuera, for the remainder of the day there was but cannonading and skirmishing.

It is impossible, by any description, to do justice to the distinguished gallantry of the troops; but every individual most nobly did his duty, and

which will be well proved by the great loss we have suffered, though repulsing the enemy; and it is observed that our dead, particularly of the 57th regiment, were lying, as they had fought, in ranks, and every wound was in the front.

The Hon. Major-General William Stewart most particularly distinguished himself, and conduced much to the honours of the day. He received two contusions, but would not quit the field. Major-General, the Hon. G. L. Cole, is also entitled to every praise; and I have to regret being deprived for some time of his services by the wound he has received. The Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel Abercromby, commanding the 2d brigade, 2d division, and Major L'Estrange, of the 31st regiment, deserve to be particularly mentioned; and nothing could exceed the conduct and gallantry of Colonel Inglis at the head of his regiment. To the Hon. Major-General Lumley, for the very able manner in which he opposed the numerous cavalry of the enemy, and foiled him in his object, I am particularly indebted. To Major-General Hamilton, who commanded on the left, during the severe attack upon our right, I am also much indebted; and the Portuguese brigades of Brigadier-Generals Fonseca and Archibald Campbell deserve to be mentioned. To Major-General Alten, and to the excellent brigade under his orders, I have much praise to give; and it is with great pleasure I assure your Lordship that the good and gallant conduct of every corps, and of every person, was in proportion to the opportunity that offered for distinguishing themselves. I know not an individual who did not do his duty. I have, I fear, to regret the loss to the service of Colonel Collins, commanding a Portuguese brigade, his leg having been carried off by a cannon-shot. He is an officer of great merit: and I deeply lament the death of Major-General Hoghton, and of those two promising officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Myers and Lieutenant-Colonel Duckworth.

It is most pleasing to me to inform your Lordship not only of the steady and gallant conduct of our allies, the Spanish troops, under his Excellency General Blake; but also to assure you that the most perfect harmony has subsisted between us; and that General Blake not only conformed in all things to the general line proposed by your Lordship; but in the details, and in whatever I suggested to his Excellency, I received the most immediate and cordial assent and co-operation, and nothing was omitted on his part to ensure the success of our united efforts; and, during the battle, he most essentially, by his experience, knowledge, and zeal, contributed to its fortunate result.

His Excellency the Captain-General Castanos, who had united the few troops he had in a state to be brought into the field to those of General Blake, and placed them under his orders, assisted in person in the field; and not only on this, but on all occasions, I am much indebted to General Castanos, who is ever beforehand in giving whatever can be beneficial to the success of the common cause.

Though I unfortunately cannot point out the corps, or many individuals of the Spanish troops, that distinguished themselves, from the cause already stated, yet I will not omit to mention the names of General Ballasteros, whose gallantry was most conspicuous, as one of the corps he had under his command; and the same of General Zayas. The Spanish cavalry have behaved extremely well, and the Count de Penne Ville Mur is particularly deserving to be mentioned.

I annex the return of our loss on this hard-contested day. It is very severe; and, in addition to it, is the loss of the troops under his Excellency General Blake, who are killed, missing, or wounded; but of which I have not the return. The loss of the enemy, though I cannot know what it is, must be still more severe. He has left on the field of battle about 2000 dead, and we have taken from 6 to 700 prisoners. He has had five Generals killed and wounded: of the former, the Generals of Division Werlé, Pepin, and Gazan; and two others, amongst the latter. His force was much more considerable than we had been informed of, as I do not think he displayed less than from 20 to 22,000 infantry; and he certainly had 4000 cavalry, with a numerous and heavy artillery. His overbearing cavalry cramped and confined all our operations, and, with his artillery, saved his infantry after its rout.

He retired after the battle to the ground he had been previously on, but occupying it in position, and this morning, or rather during the night, commenced his retreat, on the road which he came, towards Seville, and has abandoned Badajoz to its fate. He left a number of his wounded on the ground he had retired to, and which we are administering what assistance to we can. I have sent our cavalry to follow the enemy, but in that arm he is too powerful for us to attempt anything against him in the plains he is traversing.

Thus we have reaped the advantage we proposed from our opposition to the attempts of the enemy; and whilst he has been forced to abandon the object for which he has almost stripped Andalusia of troops, instead of having accomplished the haughty boasts with which Marshal Soult harangued his troops on leaving Seville, he returns there with a curtailed army, and, what perhaps may be still more hurtful to him, with a diminished reputation.

In enumerating the services received from the officers of my own staff, I must particularly call your Lordship's attention to those of Brigadier-General D'Urban, Quarter-Master-General to the Portuguese army, and which I cannot sufficiently praise, though I can appreciate. On all occasions I have felt the benefit of his talents and services, and more particularly on this, where they very essentially contributed to the success of the day. And I cannot here omit the name of Lieutenant-Colonel Hardinge, Deputy Quarter-Master General to the Portuguese troops, whose talents and exertions deserve my thanks. To Brigadier-General Mozinho, Adjutant-

General of the Portuguese army; and to Lieutenant-Colonel Rooke, Assistant Adjutant-General to the united British and Portuguese force; to Brigadier-General Lemos; and to the officers of my own personal staff, I am indebted for their assistance.

To the services of Lieutenant-Colonel Arbuthnot (Major in His Majesty's service), I am also much indebted; and he is the bearer of this to your Lordship, and is fully enabled to give you any further information you may desire, and is most deserving of any favour your Lordship may be pleased to recommend him for to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) W. C. BERESFORD.

P. S. Major-General Hamilton marches this evening with the Portuguese division, a brigade of six-pounders, and some cavalry, to re-invest Badajoz.

(No. II.)

G. O.

Camp of Albuera, 17th May, 1811.

Marshal Sir William Carr Beresford cannot delay giving his testimony of approbation, and his warmest praise, to the highly meritorious and noble conduct of the Allied troops engaged in the battle of yesterday. The three nations, in their gallant conduct, equally shewed their love of each other, their hatred of the enemy, and the estimation in which they hold the liberty and honour of their respective countries.

He could mention the names of several officers of all ranks that have distinguished themselves; but, on the occasion of such an order, it is sufficient to say, that the result of the day is the best approbation to all. A proud and haughty enemy, confident of success, was defeated, and sent back, in confusion and dismay, to appreciate better the efforts and prowess of those fighting in the better cause.

For the zealous and cordial co-operation received from his Excellency General Blake, the Marshal cannot omit expressing his high sense, and the mode in which he applied his troops where necessary, tended materially to the advantage and honour of the day.

(Signed) J. ROOKE, Lieutenant-Colonel, A. A. General.

(No. III.)

G. O.

Albuera, 21st May, 1811.

Marshal Sir William Carr Beresford, on the 17th, gave out an Order of Thanks to the Allied troops for their conduct in repulsing and beating the enemy in the battle of the 16th He cannot, however, forego addressing the

corps of British and Portuguese troops more directly under his orders for that day, so honourable to all those engaged in it.

The Marshal is almost confined to give his thanks generally to the officers and soldiers, as, where all and every one have acted well and nobly, it is difficult to make distinctions. He cannot but applaud and thank the whole of the corps—cavalry, artillery, and infantry, engaged on that day, in which the honour of their respective countries, and of each individual, was so well maintained. Courage was everywhere seconded by discipline, and victory was the result.

To Major-General the Hon. G. L. Cole, the Marshal feels his thanks particularly due; and Major-General the Hon. William Stewart he considers as having rendered most particular service, and contributed much to the fortunate result of the day. He requests he will accept his thanks.

The Marshal regrets the misfortune which occurred to the 1st brigade, 2d division; it was acting nobly under its gallant commander, in applying the British weapon, the bayonet, which the enemy has never yet been able to withstand; but its being taken in the rear at that very instant by cavalry, which, from the state of the weather, could not have been previously perceived, stopped its gallant attempts. The Marshal is satisfied with the conduct of this brigade. The 2d and 3d brigades of this division merit the Marshal's particular thanks; and whilst he participates in the regret of every soldier for the loss in officers and men, and particularly of Major-General Hoghton and Lieutenant-Colonel Duckworth, yet it is a consolation to know they are laid in the bed of honour, died in the noblest of causes, and were nobly and fully revenged by the gallant soldiers that survived them. Colonel Inglis and the 1st battalion, 57th regiment, the Hon. Lieut.-Colonel Abercromby, and Major L'Estrange, particularly merit the Marshal's thanks. With the Fusileer brigade, he regrets the loss of its gallant commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Myers, and he thanks it for the conspicuous part it had in the success of the day. To Major-General Alten, and the brigade under his orders, of the light infantry, King's German Legion, he returns his particular thanks; the dispositions of the General, and the conduct of the officers and men, were everything he could desire. To Major-General Hamilton, and to the Portuguese troops, every praise is due. Discipline was all that was requisite with their natural courage to put them on a level with the best of troops, and they are now so.

To Brigadier-General Harvey and his brigade much praise is due for its conduct, particularly for its steadiness in repulsing the charge of French cavalry. To the brigades of Brigadier-General Fonseca and Brigadier-General Campbell, the Marshal also returns his thanks, as well as to that of Colonel Collins, and he infinitely regrets the loss of this officer.

To Major-General the Hon. William Lumley, for the able manner in which, against the vast superiority in numbers opposed to him, he manœuvred the Allied cavalry, foiling the enemy in his object, the Marshal

returns his thanks; and the officers and soldiers of the cavalry are equally entitled to them for their steady determined conduct, which deterred the enemy, even with his superiority, from daring anything against them. The Marshal cannot omit also mentioning with praise Brigadier-General Long and the Hon. Colonel de Grey, for the part they had in conducting the cavalry; as also Colonel Otway, for the dispositions made by him for covering the left of the line.

To Major Hartman and to Major Dickson, and to the officers and soldiers of the British, German, and Portuguese artillery, the greatest praise is due, and the Marshal returns them his thanks.

The Marshal feels that every officer and every soldier deserves particular mention. The conduct of all was noble, and never was a stronger proof given of British courage and of British prowess; and the Portuguese have shewn they can, in the field of battle, emulate the allies they love.

The Marshal returns his thanks to the officers of his staff; and he cannot but particularly give them to Brigadier-General D'Urban, Quarter-Master-General, who so much contributed to the success of the day. To Brigadier-General Mozinho, Lieutenant-Colonel Rooke, Lieutenant-Colonel Hardinge, and the officers of the Adjutant and Quarter-Master-General's department, and to Brigadier-General Lemos, and the officers of his personal staff, he returns his thanks for the assistance he received from them.

Soldiers! you have beaten and sent off with shame a haughty and boasting enemy, and you have covered yourselves with glory. The victories of the British troops over their enemy are numbered by the battles they have fought!

(Signed) J. ROOKE, Lieutenant-Colonel
A. A. General.

(No. IV.)

Commanders-in-chief, Generals, Officers commanding the Artillery and Regiments and the Chiefs of the Etat-Major of the Allied army, in the Battle of Albuera, 16th of May, 1811.

Field-Marshal Sir William Carr Beresford, K.B.	Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese army. Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-Portuguese corps, and (for the day) Commander-in-chief of the whole Allied force.
The Captain-General Don Francisco Xavier Castanos, Captain-General of Estremadura.	Commanding the 5th Spanish army, which he placed under the orders of General Blake.
Lieut.-General Don Joaquim Blake, Member of the Regency of Spain.	Commanding the 4th Spanish army.

TROOPS.

ARTILLERY.

Spanish.	Six four-pounders.	Colonel Don Joze de Miranda.
German.	Six nine-pounders.	Major Hartman.
Portuguese.	Six nine-pounders.	Major Braune.
	Six six-pounders.	Captain Arriaga.
English.	Six nine-pounders.	Major Hawker.
	Four six-pounders.	Captain Lefevre.
	Horse Artillery.	

The whole under the command of Major Dickson, Royal British Artillery.

CAVALRY—4th Army.

Spanish.	Part of the Regiments of Granadeiros a Cavallo Esquadrones de Instruction Provisional de Santiago Hussares de Castilla	Brigadiero-General Don Casimero Loy.
	5th Army.	
	Reyna Bourbon Lusitania Algarve Hussares de Estremadura Cazadores de Sevilla	Brigadiero-General the Count of Penne Ville Mur.

Portuguese.	1st Reg. Tente. Coronel.	Manoel P. Amoral.	Colonel Otway.
	7th ditto .... ditto	H. Watson.	
	5th ditto, 1 squadron.	Capt. F. Watson.	Detachment belonging to the brigade of Brigadier-General Madden.
	8th ditto, 1 ditto.	Major H. Wyndham.	
English.	13th light dragoons.	Colonel Head.	Colonel the Hon. George de Grey.
	3d dragoon guards.	Colonel Sir Granby Calcraft.	
	4th dragoons.	Lieut.-Colonel Leighton.	

The Portuguese and English under the command of Brigadier-General Long.

The whole cavalry under the command of Major-General the Hon. William Lumley.

INFANTRY.—*Spanish.*

CORPS.	REGIMENTS.	COMMANDERS.
Vanguard of the 24th army.	Murcia Canaries 2º Leon Caçadores Reunidos Campo-Mayor	Mareçhal de Campo Don Jozé de Lardizabal.
3d division of the 4th army.	1 Catalanes Balbastro Pravia Lima Castropol Cangas de Tino Yniesta	Lieut.-General Don Francisco de Ballasteros.
4th division of the 4th army.	Zapadores 2d Battalion Spanish Guards 4th ditto ditto ditto Yrelanda Patria Imperiales de Toledo Legion Estrangeira Ciudad Rodrigo Walloon Guards	Mareçhal de Campo Don Jozé de Zayas.
5th Army.	Zapadores e Guias Rey Zamora Voluntarios de Navarra	Brigadier-General Don Carlos de Espana.

INFANTRY.—*Portuguese, German, and English.*

Corps and Generals.	Regiments.	Commanders.	Brigadiers.
2d division. The Hon. Major-General William Stewart.	3d Buffs	Lieut.-Col. Stewart	1st brigade. Lt.-Col. Colborne.
	31st	Major L'Estrange	
	2d 48th	Major Brooke	
	66th	Capt. Binning	
	1 com. 5th batt. 60th.		
	28th	Major Paterson	2d brigade. The Hon. Lieut.-Colonel Abercromby.
	34th	Lieut.-Col. Fenwick	
	39th	Major Lindesay	
	1 com. 5th batt. 60th.		
	29th	Lieut.-Col. White	3d brigade. Major-General Hoghton.
	1st 48th	Lt.-Col. Duckworth	
	57th	Colonel Inglis	
	1 com. 5th batt. 60th	Senior officer of 16th / Major M'Mahon.	
4th division. The Hon. Major General G. L. Cole.	1st batt. Royal Fusileers	Major Nooth.	1st brig. Lieut.-Col. Sir William Myers.
	2d batt. ditto	Lieut.-Col. Blakeney	
	23d Royal Welsh	Lieut.-Col. Ellis	
	11th Portuguese	Lt.-Col. M'Donnell	Col. Harvey.
	23d ditto	Lieut.-Col. Stubbs	
	1st batt. L. L. Legion, since 7th Caçadores	Lieut.-Col. Hawkshaw.	
	N. B. The 2d British brigade, under Col. Kemmis, was on its march to join, and could not arrive till the 17th.		
Portuguese division. Major-Gen. Hamilton.	4th regiment	Lieut.-Col. A. W. Campbell	Brigadier-General A. Campbell.
	10th	Conde de Pezende	
	2d	Col. A. H. de Costa	Brigadier-General A. Luiz Fonseca.
	14th	Lieut.-Col. J. Oliver	
Unattached.	5th Portuguese	Lieut.-Col. F. X. de S. Perreira	Col. Collins.
	5th Caçadores	Lieut.-Col. M'Creagh	
	1st Lt. Germ.	Lieut.-Col. Leonhart	Major-Gen. Chas. Baron Alten.
	2d ditto	Lieut.-Col. Halkett	

CHIEFS OF THE STAFF.

Adjutant-General	Spanish forces	Don Antonio Burriel.
Ditto	Portuguese	Brigadier-Gen. Manoel de Brito Mozinho
Ditto	British	Lieut.-Col. J. Rooke, acting for the Anglo-Portuguese corps.
Quarter-Master-Gen.	Portuguese and British	Brigadier-General Benj. D'Urban, acting for the whole corps.
Deputy Quarter-Master-General		Colonel Henry Hardinge, Portuguese army, in charge of the duties for the troops of that nation.

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